Martin Boyd's Anglo-Australian Novels: a Study of the Development of Major Themes

By

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Declaration

Except where otherwise indicated
this thesis is my own work.

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List of Abbreviated Works of Martin Boyd

CC *The Cardboard Crown.* Lansdowne, Melbourne, 1971.

DD *Day of My Delight.* Lansdowne, Melbourne, 1965.

DYM *A Difficult Young Man.* Lansdowne, Melbourne, 1965.

LB *Lucinda Brayford.* Lansdowne, Mellbourne, 1969.

M *The Montforts.* Rigby, Adelaide, 1963.

MEI *Much Else in Italy: A Subjective Travel Book.*
Macmillan, London, 1958.

OL *Outbreak of Love.* Lansdowne, Melbourne, 1971.

SF *A Single Flame.* Dent, London, 1939.

WBS *When Blackbirds Sing.* Lansdowne, Melbourne, 1971.

Abstract

This thesis explores the development of major themes in Martin Boyd's Anglo-Australian novels, that is, *The Montforts*, *Lucinda Brayford* and the Langton sequence. Examination of these novels shows that, though constantly drawing on Boyd's family background and his personal experience in both Australia and Europe, they are not repetitive, but demonstrate a trend towards growing maturity in writing.

The first chapter starts with the examination of *The Montforts*, arguing that the writer focuses attention on the history of a family rather than on the study of character. Through the depiction of the migration of the Montforts and of the impact of the migration on the family and their descendents, emerge Boyd's initial themes of "the complex fate", his hatred of the middle-class and his correlation of spiritual and material well-being.

Chapter two concentrates on *Lucinda Brayford* and argues that Boyd shifts his interest from the history of a family to the study of character. Through the description of the searches of Julie, Lucinda and Stephen for a value in life, Boyd's themes go beyond those of *The Montforts* to encompass the ideas of the nature of happiness, the meaning of life and the two worlds: England and Australia.

The Langton sequence is examined in four chapters. In these chapters, it is argued that the Langton novels seem to combine the merits of both *The Montforts* and *Lucinda Brayford.* With the exception of *When Blackbirds Sing*, the Langton books use Guy Langton as narrator-persona, a device which makes Boyd's themes fuller and more complex. The themes of class, the meaning of life, the nature of happiness and the two worlds find their fullest expression here. Chapter three focuses on *The Cardboard Crown*, in which Boyd concentrates on the quest for happiness on earth through Alice's search for values. The fourth chapter is concerned with *Outbreak of Love*, in which the writer continues his argument in *The Cardboard Crown* and illustrates where happiness might lie through the story of Diana. Chapter five concerns Boyd's restatement through the depiction of Dominic in *A Difficult Young Man* of the cultural issues concerning Europe and Australia

and of the question of cultural and personal identity. The final chapter deals with Boyd's last attempt to transform his wartime experience into fiction through Dominic's search for a spiritual home in *When Blackbirds Sing.*

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Introduction

> The function of art is to enhance the quality of our lives, and to give us intensity of vision.
>
> Martin Boyd

This thesis is an attempt to contribute to the understanding of Martin Boyd's writing, whose major interest to the foreign student may well be as a correction to the image of Australian literature as basically in the Henry Lawson tradition of pioneering endeavour.

Martin Boyd is a prolific writer. In the course of his life, he produced a verse-collection, one travel book, two autobiographies and sixteen novels. His novels can be divided into two categories: those with a European setting, and those dealing with an Anglo-Australian theme. It is his Anglo-Australian books that brought him reputation both in and out of Australia. This thesis is intended to concentrate on his Anglo-Australian novels, that is, on *The Montforts*, *Lucinda Brayford* and the Langton sequence. In these novels, Boyd draws on both his family background and his personal experience, transforming this material into art.

Some critics have suggested that heavy reliance on his family background and his personal experience in these novels prevents the writer from using his imagination. Kathleen Fitzpatrick first gave sustained attention to Boyd's novels, regarding him as an excellent social historian. Yet her praise goes hand in hand with a criticism, voiced even before the publication of the last three Langton novels:

> As a novelist, Martin Boyd was crippled from the outset by the complex fate in an extreme form. He was indoctrinated from the first with the view that the scene and society about him was inferior; but he was not removed to another scene and another society until the impressionable years, in which a novelist acquires his capital for life, were over. This has simply left him without a subject, except his personal past and that of his family. This poverty in subject-matter is evident in his tendency to repeat himself.[1]

This view is shared by Cecil Hadgraft, who writes:

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[1]Kathleen Fitzpatrick, 'Martin Boyd and the Complex Fate of the Australian Novelist', *Commonwealth Literary Fund Lecture*, Canberra, 1953, p.14.

> Any reader of *A Single Flame* is in possession of the essence of his main novels . . . . In these novels the names are sometimes changed, the incidents are attributed to different people, the places are varied; but all are recognisably similar. There seems no reason why the process should not continue indefinitely, since the chief requirement is ingenuity in shuffling round and fitting together the constituent pieces.[2]

It is true that Boyd's observations of life in Australian and English societies form the basis of the life described in these novels. But the writer is quite conscious of his role, saying: "The function of art is to enhance the quality of our lives, and to give us intensity of vision".[3] The present thesis argues that in spite of similarities, these novels are not merely repetitive, but demonstrate Boyd's continual search for a form of fiction appropriate to the fullest expression of his moral and spiritual vision.

The Montforts, published in 1928, was Boyd's first attempt at an Australian theme. It is a fictional treatment of the chronicle history of his mother's family, the à Becketts, from their arrival in Australia until the end of the First World War. In his autobiography *A Single Flame* he describes it as "a pseudo-Galsworthian account of my mother's family over five generations, full of thinly disguised portraits. It was rather witty and enabled me to pay off grudges against aunts and uncles who had been rude to me as a child"(SF, p.204). *The Montforts* is a very personal novel, written in perhaps too subjective a way. Characters are crowded together in such a way that Boyd cannot study particular individuals in depth. Readers frequently have to refer to the family tree. In spite of this, its significance is that Boyd takes as his subject a social class and a life that few Australian writers have dealt with. This social class is the vanishing aristocracy whose members believe that a real gentleman is not expected to work for a living and that life is to be enjoyed. It is, in these terms, a very original novel. Soon after its publication, *The Montforts* won the Australian Literature Society's gold medal. A revised version of it was published in 1963.

Lucinda Brayford was published in 1946 and brought Boyd immediate fame. In the year of the book's publication, a leading newspaper organized a prize for the best book of the year. The committee unanimously chose *Lucinda Brayford*. The proprietor who had appointed the committee rejected its choice and then appointed another, with the result that the same book was again chosen, only to be rejected as before. Hearing the news, Martin Boyd had this comment to make: "I was not sorry at his refusal, as I would have felt humiliated at receiving, amid much publicity, a cheque from a man whose species was anathema to me, and it saved me

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[2]Cecil Hadgraft, *Australian Literature: a Critical Account to* 1955, Heinemann, London, 1960, pp.251-53.

[3]Martin Boyd, 'Preoccupations and Intentions', *Southerly*, vol.28, no.2, 1968, p.89.

from the odium of declining it"(DD, p.216). The remark is certainly consistent with Boyd's character in general.

In *Lucinda Brayford*, the writer again takes up the material first explored in *The Montforts* and then abandoned for twenty years. Between *The Montforts* and *Lucinda Brayford*, Boyd wrote *Scandal of Spring* (1934), *The Lemon Farm* (1935), *The Painted Princess: a Fairy Story* (1936), *The Picnic* (1937), *Night of the Party* (1938) and *Nuns in Jeopardy* (1940). Besides these novels, he also produced one of his autobiographies, *A Single Flame* (1939). The novels he wrote in this period are not of much importance in themselves. But it was a significant stage in the development of the novelist. The success of *Lucinda Brayford* is due to the experience he gained in the writing of these minor works. Boyd restricts the focus of *Lucinda Brayford* to the period treated in the last part of *The Montforts*, the period from the 1880s to the end of the Second World War. Compared to *The Montforts*, the narrative is more leisurely and the characterization firmer and fuller. His method consists chiefly in the manipulation of point of view. His own experience of the world wars is woven into the history of the central character. The writer is more interested in the portrayal of Lucinda herself than in social history. This justifies what Brenda Niall has said: "The novel is not the history of a family but the study of a character in perspective".[4]

Owing to the success of *Lucinda Brayford* and the money he made from the book, Martin Boyd was at last able to return to Australia in 1948, with the idea of settling down there for good. Though the house was comfortable and life easy, he felt alienated from Australian society. In 1951 he sailed to Europe for a visit. He was never to return to Australia again, because of ill health and the difficulty of running the ancestral property.

The years from 1948 to 1951 in Australia seem to have been very fruitful for his late writing career, in spite of his personal disappointment. At the Grange he found the impetus and material for his finest novels, known collectively as the Langton tetralogy. We can read these novels individually, as each stands by itself. Yet when we read them together, we can see Boyd's complete philosophy of life. Continuity is sustained by use of the same narrator throughout, except in the last novel *When Blackbirds Sing*. In these novels, the writer combines the merits of both *The Montforts* and *Lucinda Brayford*. He describes a set of family relationships over a period stretching from the 1870s to the First World War. He manages to weave his ideas - his love of human beings; his hatred of the abuse of

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[4]Brenda Niall, *Martin Boyd*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1974, p.20.

power and his resentment of the pointlessness of war - into the presentation of his characters. In this sense, his real interest is, as Leonie Kramer has claimed, "the description of character in the making".[5]

The methods Boyd uses in the Langton novels are quite new and different from those of predecessors, *The Montforts* and *Lucinda Brayford*. Boyd tries to give the reader the illusion that they are reading a genuine family history so as to conceal his real comments and criticisms. Hence he uses Guy Langton, who searches for the family truth through reminiscences from older members of the family, several qualifying accounts of the same episode, diary entries and the like, as narrator-persona. However, we should be cautious of establishing too strict a correspondence between his fictional characters and true-to-life counterparts. For example, it is obvious that his brother Merric, who was "at an agricultural college, where he was more or less tortured for his noble eccentricities"(DD, p.18), provides the inspiration for Dominic Langton, the difficult young man. Indeed, Boyd explained as much in an essay, 'Preoccupations and Intentions'.[6] It is equally obvious that Dominic's wartime experience, the subject of *When Blackbirds Sing*, is in large part based on Boyd's own role in and responses to the First World War. The creation of Guy Langton, the narrator in the first three novels, evidences Boyd's innovative technique in the presentation of character. But we cannot identify Guy with the writer himself.

The Langton novels confirm Boyd's special place in Australian literature as a writer who is not only capable of accurately describing the social life of a particular class, but also of using art as a weapon for the voicing of his opinions on life, society and the world. These novels demonstrate Boyd's life-long search for "the non-existent abiding city"(DD, p.x), a place where all human beings can live a peaceful and happy life.

The Montforts, *Lucinda Brayford* and the Langton novels are written at different stages of Boyd's career in each of which we can see his growing maturity as a writer. This thesis aims to trace this process of maturity in themes which will be detailed in the course of six chapters.

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[5]Leonie Kramer, 'Martin Boyd', *Australian Quarterly*, Vol. 35, no,2, June 1963, p.34.

[6]Martin Boyd, "Preoccupations and Intentions", *Southerly*, Vol. 28, no.2, 1968, p.87.

Chapter 1

The Montforts: the First Statement of a Theme

> . . . a pseudo-Galsworthian account of my mother's family over five generations, full of thinly disguised portraits.
>
> Martin Boyd

The Montforts is the first major novel written by Martin Boyd. In this novel, he uses his mother's family as the basis for a portrayal of a family's migration to Australia. Through the straightforward account of the fortunes of the four generations of the Montforts, from Henry Montfort down to Raoul Montfort Blair, Boyd offers us a picture of their way of life in a new country. Though it is a less successful book than *Lucinda Brayford* and the Langton novels, as Boyd himself complained when he read it to revise it in 1963 (DD, p.151), it does initiate a trend that was to grow throughout his writing career. The present chapter will concentrate on Boyd's ideas in this novel, which are further developed in *Lucinda Brayford* and the Langton series.

The Montforts is a study of the migration of the Montforts and of the impact the migration has on the family and their descendants. Through a description of this impact, Boyd gives us a picture of their two worlds, that of England and Australia. For Boyd, England has a rich culture and long history of civilization, to which the Montforts are attached and to which they attempt to return, generation after generation, while Australia is an ancient land almost without history or civilization. In his first autobiography, *A Single Flame*, Boyd has this comment to make about his sense of the past and the nostalgia for Europe he felt from earliest childhood:

> When I was a child my parents spoke a great deal about England, and my elder brothers remembered it clearly. I gathered from their conversation that life there was far more interesting and varied than in Australia. I imagined Europe as a place where one spent one's time in restaurant cars travelling between beautiful cities, or else in an English country house. In the studio there were portfolios full of sketches of a hundred places between Seville and Venice, and as my parents had a love of light, and expressed it in their work, I also imagined that all Europe was bathed in perpetual sunshine. From as long as I can remember my chief wish was to return to Europe. (SF, pp.11-12)

Boyd's preoccupation with the past and the nostalgia for Europe forms one of the themes of *The Montforts*. Because of this preoccupation, Kathleen Fitzpatrick describe Boyd as a novelist with a "complex fate", an expression borrowed from Henry James. She explains that "the complex fate consists in having one's physical roots in one continent and one's cultural roots in another and distant one".[1] Through the description of the migration of the Montforts, Boyd explores the ramifications of such a fate so as to transform them into art.

In Book I of *The Montforts*, Boyd explores the responses of the Henry Montforts to their new surroundings soon after their arrival of Melbourne, through the point of view of Letitia, wife of Henry Montfort. Letitia is a sociable woman, conscious of her social standing and good manners. She prizes elegance and good taste, and all that suggests "breeding". The novelist intimates that women are more sensitive to the effects of the migration on their family than men are. So through Letitia, Boyd explores the impact of the colony on a reserved English woman of refined manners and tastes. After several months of confinement and deprivation on the ship, Letitia feels a relief at the end of their voyage. Like other passengers, she is eager to have a first glimpse of their future home. Her heart sinks when she sees nothing but the barren and arid land stretching far away before her. "What an odious place!" (M, p.22) exclaims her daughter Amy. This resounds in her ear and expresses her own feelings. This Melbourne is not what she expected to see and to live in. She becomes more worried about the absence of any sign of civilization. Now the great ocean has become a dividing line between her and her former world. She feels regret for what seems to her the paradise she has left. She loses her sense of a defined self:

> Robbed of the background which she had so carefully built, she felt as if in some way there were less of herself as a definite human entity. This thought hardly was shaped in words in her mind, but it was the sensation she experienced. (M, p.25)

Letitia's feelings towards the new country are further explored through the relatives she meets. An example is her meeting with and commenting on Sophie, wife of Simon Montfort. Sophie is hard-working and can endure hardships. Simon is proud of her as she can understand his values, which are not those of "society". However, he is a little unconsciously uneasy that Letitia may be critical of her. He would like Letitia to be proud of his choice. In Letitia's imagination, Sophie will be her "most intimate friend and companion" (M, p.22). However, to her great disappointment, Sophie looks like "a housekeeper" (M, p.23) when they are

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[1]Kathleen Fitzpatrick, 'Martin Boyd and the Complex Fate of the Australian Novelist', *Commonwealth Literary Fund Lecture*, Canberra University College, 1953, p.3.

introduced. Through Letitia's critical attitudes towards the place she sees and the people she meets, Boyd offers us a grey picture of Australia and anticipates that the Montforts will suffer from the lack of culture and civilization in this new country and are bound to feel nostalgia for their old home in Europe.

As the novel unfolds, we can see that Letitia is very nostalgic for her old home in England. She longs to go back to England for a visit, even if for a very brief time. When she sees people like the Wynches sailing back, she has "an intense longing to return" (M, p.34). Years later, when Henry gets leave of absence, they decide to go back to England for a holiday. Letitia feels very excited and begins to prepare for the journey long before their departure. In her memory, England is always "deep green" (M, p.73), different from the new country with its "sharp, bright, half-hostile landscape" (M, p.73).

The Henry Montforts' home visit is a great success. It not only satisfies Letitia's hunger for home, but also enhances her vision of the world. Back in Melbourne, she is full of hope:

> Letitia had returned to Melbourne with a refreshed interest in life. The renewal in England of early friendships, the sight of new fashions and buildings, and her tour with Henry through foreign countries had given her both an appreciation of her own home in St. Kilda, and many ideas for its improvement. (M, p.76)

In all this, Boyd is exploring the feelings of early upper-middle class settlers in a new country, who tend to look back to their old home, which is for them associated with a rich culture and civilization. Since their physical home is in the new country, they try to transplant their civilization. In the process, questions are raised, relating to the complex allegiances of immigrants and to culture in a new land. For example, through the Henry Montforts' visit to Europe, Boyd hints that they will bring culture back to Australia. This theme of complex or divided loyalties is later developed more fully in the Langton novels.

How does the idea of a complex allegiance work in the situation of the next generation of Montforts? Sim Montfort is born and grows up in Australia. He can be called a bona fide Australian. When he is seventeen years old, Simon sends him to receive a gentleman's education in England. While in England, Sim is regarded by his fellow students and relatives as "a new zoological specimen"(M, p.49) simply because he is an Australian. He cannot adjust to the new surroundings, so he always writes homesick letters to Sophie, which astonishes those in Australia who are homesick for England. Years later, Sim marries Jane, a friend of his childhood who moves back to England with her parents after the death of her brother, Peter.

The two go back to Australia for their married life together. On hearing of the death of Captain Wynch, Jane's father, they go back to England to look after Jane's mother. They stay in England for three years. During their stay there, Sim is not satisfied with life as he has nothing to do except hunting in winter. On top of this, he is annoyed with those who are kind and patronizing to him simply because he is an Australian. Now, to Sim, Australia is a place with "freedom and open spaces" (M, p.76). At last, he persuades Jane to return to that "freedom". Clearly Sim proves to be a victim of the "complex fate". In England, he is an Australian. In Australia, he is an Englishman. This same "complex fate" later leads the Sim Montforts to attempt to return to England.

On this voyage to England by the members of the second generation of Montforts, Richard, the third son of Sim and Jane, overhears that Sim is regarded by a German noble as "only some colonial" (M, p.106). He is really shocked as he has never before realised "colonial" can be an insulting term. He has a sense of being wrongly and unjustly accused. But the English Montforts always have this dual feeling towards their Australian relatives. They look forward to meeting their Australian relatives, as these are quite wealthy. At the same time, they feel uneasy about their social presentability, which may bring embarrassment to them. Sim's children are always being criticized. Dora has "a distinctly Australian voice" (M, p.107) and Sophie Jane is "tiresomely simple" (M, p.107). Richard is always frightened "under their critical glances and patronizing approval"(M, p.108). Here, Boyd suggests some of the disadvantages of belonging to two countries. It is a source of trouble and restlessness for people like the Sim Montforts. However, the Sim Montforts are quite fortunate since they are able to travel frequently on the continent and shuttle between England and Australia without being constrained by lack of money. In this way, they can compensate for the disadvantage.

Because of the easy and comfortable life in England, the Sim Montforts get more and more used to the place. Sophie Jane, for example, does not think that she will ever go back to Australia, feeling that the sea trip is dreadful. She likes the flowers in England, and comments on the difference between English and Australian flowers:

> I love the vetches. English flowers are so moist and plentiful. In Australia the flowers are scarce and dry. (M, p.122)

Through Sophie Jane, Boyd hints that Australian life, like its flowers, is boring and monotonous, while English life is rich and colourful. This is one of the things which has lured the Montforts back to England. However, the Sim Montforts are fated to go back to Australia, the place to which they physically belong in the first

instance. In Australia, overextension of Melbourne's economy brings disastrous results. Sim finds that they are on the verge of bankruptcy. So financial loss brings the family back to Australia. Again, the descendants of the Montforts will suffer what their ancestors have suffered before them: the predicament of divided allegiances.

In Book III of *The Montforts*, Boyd continues to explore the effects of the migration on the younger generation of the Montforts. Through a full-length of portrayal of Raoul Montfort Blair, Boyd dramatizes the issues of "belonging" and "culture". Raoul is born in Italy at a time when his parents are on a continental tour, not long before they are forced to return to Australia. As a child, he is conscious of the two worlds - the one his immediate surroundings, and the other a world, spoken of by his elders, which is mysterious to his imagination:

> They spoke often and regretfully of a lovely place called England, where the wild flowers were like garden flowers, and where, apparently, there were most beautiful houses. (M, p.172)

From earliest childhood, Raoul is infected with a sense of the past and nostalgia for England. He grows up thinking of Australia as a country which is inferior to England:

> England was a kind of fairy-land. From Sophie he had intense religious instruction, which convinced him of the necessity of getting to Heaven. From his own observation he has convinced of the necessity of getting to England. England and Heaven were the two ultimate destinations of reasonable man. (M, p.173)

As the novel progresses, Boyd further explores Raoul's feelings towards his "fairy-land". At the university, Raoul becomes a friend of his third cousin, Mabel Allman. Through her, he is introduced to the gatherings where he meets "professors and their daughters, accomplished musicians, an artist, if he happened to be a gentleman" (M, p.183). They all come from England and always talk about new things. All this attracts Raoul's interest. He is anxious to go to England and see for himself "Shavian plays, the terrace of the House of Commons, and the Russian Ballet" (M, p.183). With the outbreak of war, his dream at last comes true. He goes to London to take a commission. Though he appreciates the Old World more than the new, he never feels quite at home when he gets there. On his visit to Cousin Theresa, he is introduced to her friends with this remark: "This is my cousin, who has come from Australia to fight for us" (M, p.203). Raoul thinks England is his own country and that he has come to defend it. However, he is only treated as a colonial who has come to fight for the English. On a tour round London with Theresa after the war, he boasts of his well-known ancestors. Theresa is not happy about it and feels that "a colonial [has] no business to have all these

grandfathers" (M, p.208). When Raoul becomes aware of this, he stops mentioning them. He has a similar experience on his visit to a cousin, Gracie Blair:

> Raoul had not been there ten minutes when she told him that he was not like an Australian. He did not know whether this was a compliment to himself or an insult to his country. Before dinner she told him that they changed for dinner, but that if he had no evening clothes it did not matter. . . .
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> During dinner she chattered on about England and Australia. . . .
>
> "I don't suppose you have big houses like this in Australia," she said. . . .
>
> She spoke of a recent outbursts of hooliganism among some Australian troops.
>
> "I suppose it is Botany Bay coming out," she said.
>
> At the end of dinner Raoul opened the door for her.
>
> "Why, you are quite civilized!" she said, and smiled archly at him as she passed out of the room.
>
> She asked Raoul about New Zealand.
>
> "The people there are nicer than in Australia, aren't they?" she said. "More like us, I mean?" (M, p.209)

However, on his voyage back to Australia, Raoul grows more English in sympathy. In England, he is angry with people who patronize him. He also finds Gracie's criticisms of Australia unbearable. He believes that in Australia he can be "English" while in England he is only a "colonial". But by the time he reaches Melbourne, "the very word Australia [has] become distasteful to him" (M, p.211). Through Raoul, Boyd again explores the feelings of those faced with the predicament of having two countries. Physically, people like Raoul belong to the new country; culturally, they are attached to the Old World. Boyd himself once tried to resolve this problem in his own life through the experiment of decorating his Australian house to suit his English taste. But this experiment failed, partly because of his alienation from the "strong bourgeois ethos of Melbourne".[2] Interestingly, Boyd was able to unite his two worlds only in his novels.

Soon after he comes back to Melbourne, Raoul devotes himself to "the rearrangement of the villa in the style of an English manor-house" (M, p.212). He keeps up his correspondence with his English relatives. He also helps his Aunt

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[2]Martin Boyd, 'Why I am an Expatriate', *Bulletin*, 10 May 1961, p.12.

Geraldine in her "choice and arrangement of furniture and friends" (M, p.214). Everything he tries to do aims to achieve the most "English" effect in the suburbs of Melbourne. Then he communicates his changed attitude to Mabel, who points out that he is utterly Australian, "full of conflicting beliefs and emotions, half of which [he] should sort out and discard" (M, p.218). Mabel expounds to Raoul her "theory of second-rateness" (M, p.217).

> I wouldn't sneer if the country were conscious of its limitations. Look at all these women, being grand and dying to speak to the Prince, and feeling as if they were at Court. This dance cost two thousand pounds, and is very well done, but it's ridiculous to pretend that it can compare with any similar European function. Compare this ballroom with that of an English ducal palace, with its art and its riches. Compare these society women with English society women. English society may be going to seed, but this society has never blossomed. Not that 'society' matters, but it illustrates my theory of second-rateness. (M, p.217)

Boyd suggests, through the character of Mabel, that Australians have no values of their own. They just borrow things foreign according to fashion, lacking creativity:

> They don't make their houses beautiful for beauty's sake. They make them beautiful to be in the fashion. Australians should either go to England or forget that they came from there as quickly as possible. Those who are so charmed by the Old World that they try to make imitation English manor-houses in Toorak, should go back again to the real thing. There's no place for them here. (M, p.217)

In the early English version of *The Montforts*, the attacks on Australian society are moderate. In 1963, when Boyd revised the novel, he added some new material, including the above comments on second-rateness. Here the view of Australian society is clear-cut and severe. Australia relies too heavily on England. It has no values of its own. The violent attack on Australian society of the early twenties for its mediocrity and materialism suggests something of the novelist's disillusionment after his homecoming in 1948.[3] In the novel, Raoul tries to bring English culture to Australia. But Mabel thinks this attempt cannot succeed because Australians are too concerned with material wealth.

Soon, Mabel sails away to search for her ideal paradise in Europe. No doubt this has an effect on Raoul. Mabel's views resound repeatedly in his ear. His life suddenly seems to be "meaningless and purposeless"(M, p.220). Raoul previously thought that his family was one of the leading families in the new country. He imagined that they were the Australian equivalent of the English aristocracy. But times have changed. Now he is eager to explore the world in his own way. Early in the novel, we saw Raoul's dream of a fairy-land is punctured by his discovery of the true nature of war. However, after the war, he still longs to see "those

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[3]Brenda Niall, *Martin Boyd*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1974, p.11.

countries and ancient civilization which he [has] never seen, except through the eyes of an infant" (M, p.228). So, at last he goes to Italy, for him a magic place with the highest level of civilization. This is very close to Boyd's own imagination and experience, as found in his 'subjective travel book', *Much Else in Italy.* The book describes the narrator's tour through Italy with his companion, a young Irishman who has been brought up in the traditions of the Protestant ascendancy. In it, Boyd suggests that spiritual and material worlds are closely connected. A work of art contains its "noumenon", that is it embodies some aspect of the spiritual world. In experiencing the art and architecture of Italy the travellers attempt to sense the "noumenon" of each object they observe. Thus Italy becomes the setting for Boyd's search for cultural legacy. In reality, the author spent the last ten years of his life there. Raoul finds the country very beautiful and satisfying to his hunger for rich sensation. There, he enjoys meeting and talking with enlightened people who only live for pleasure. Mary Montfort, his cousin, lives a luxurious life in an apartment "designed by the people for whom the dignity and decoration of life [has] been of first importance" (M, p.230). She chooses to live in Italy because she thinks she has "no nationality" (M, p.231). In Italy, she does not have to be bothered about the disadvantage of being an Australian. People will think that she is from England if she keeps her nationality in the dark.

Raoul's pilgrimage to England ends with his love for and marriage with his cousin, Madeleine, in Italy. Soon after their marriage, the young couple return to Australia. Thus ends the book. Through the young couple's return, the novelist suggests that the Montforts, after a long nostalgia for the Old World, at last settle in in the new country and that European culture will blossom there. But this is only Boyd's ideal for Australia, which he himself could not achieve in reality.

Closely linked with the question of migration is that of adaptation to a new country. The Montforts have to adapt themselves to the new surroundings since their fortunes are closely linked with them. Significantly, Boyd sets his study of their adaptation to the new country in the gold-rush period, that is to say, in a period of turmoil in Australian society. Boyd has this comment to make about the gold-rush in *The Montforts*:

> All respect for law and order vanished. . . .
>
> The careless security, hospitality, and simple friendliness which had characterized the life of the colonists disappeared.There were disorders, robberies, and riots, which culminated in the battle at Eureka blockade in 1854. (M, p.35)

The reason that Boyd sets his study of the adaptation of the Montforts in the gold-

rush period is quite obvious. For this is the period in which the influence of the Montforts begins to decline. The Montforts belong to the aristocracy in Australia. Before the gold-rush, they live a placid and gentlemanly life. But during the gold-rush period, a lot of changes take place. One of the more notable is the emergence of a middle-class which, in Boyd's opinion, is concerned only with money-making. The emergence of this new social class in Australia threatens the former way of life and the social position of the Montforts. In the novel, Boyd shows the reaction of the Montforts towards social change and their gradually changing attitude towards the newly-emerged middle-class. Though we do not see a direct confrontation between the aristocracy and the middle-class in the novel, we get the impression that Boyd has a low opinion of the middle-class through his description of the relationship between one generation and another and their attitudes towards the marriages of their children.

Sim Montfort is born and grows up in Australia. When Sim is seventeen years old, Simon decides to send him to study in England with the idea that after he finishes his gentleman's education in England, Sim should go onto the land to "harden him off" (M, p.48) and "knock out of his head any nonsense that he might have acquired in England" (M, p.48). Simon's wife cannot follow this logic and protests: "why send him to England to acquire nonsense?" (M, p.48) To which Simon replies: "Must give him a gentleman's education" (M, p.48). Through the ironical conversation about Sim's gentleman's education between Simon and his wife, we can see that Simon does not believe that Australia can turn his son into a gentleman, for Australia is only a colony. To make matters worse, the gold-rush has brought into existence a new middle class obsessed with money. To that extent, Simon's worries that his son may mix with the *nouveaux riches* and that this will ruin his future may be justified. Thus even if Sim may learn nonsense in England, Simon is still willing to send him there, since that nonsense is closely related to tradition and culture. Only with this tradition and culture can Sim be turned into a gentleman and later take his place in society as a useful colonist. However, Sim proves to be unworthy of his father's carefully-planned scheme. After he returns from England, Simon sends him to work on the station. Life there is beyond his endurance. The manager has "more regard for hard work than for humour" (M, p.63). In the end, Sim goes back to Melbourne with his young wife Jane. Thus ends their colonial experience in Australia. Sim's return to Melbourne of course infuriates Simon, who immediately tries to reason with him. He tries to persuade Sim to understand his values and go back to the station. However, Sim cannot see his point, no matter how hard he tries. Though Simon is successful "in the breeding of his cattle" (M, p.67), he fails with his children. Through the

relationship between father and son, Boyd explores the different values of the two generations. Simon comes to Australia of his own free will, for he sees there the opportunity of achieving success. His values are not those of high society but of a pioneer. Simon may be seen as representing a founding father of the colony. He wants his son to follow in his footsteps. However, Sim's values are different from his father's. He has no regard for being a colonist. He wants to live a comfortable life. We know that he marries young despite his father's opposition. Here, Boyd hints that social change has begun to invade the life of the Montforts. This is his comment on Simon's failure in regard to his son:

> He was worried and angered by the fact that his plans were failing through circumstances beyond his control. His ambitions for himself had succeeded, but he had ambitions for his family, and he was brought to the realization that these he could not make succeed. (M, p.67)

Marriage is always a great issue in the family. In this novel, Boyd describes several marriages, through which he expresses his low opinion of the middle-class. In Australia, the Montforts belong to the leading class. They want their children to marry people from the same class. When their children choose to marry lower-class people, they often express their opposition or contempt.

Sam, the younger son of Simon, has a girl friend named Flossie, whose father is a merchant during the gold-rush period. When Simon finds this out, he becomes very angry. He has a talk with Sam, saying that the girl, because she is lower-class and seemingly vulgar, is an insult to him and his relatives, such as Letitia and Mrs. Blair. Because of his father's strong opposition to his marriage with Flossie, Sam has to marry the girl secretly. Simon's attitude towards Sam's marriage shows that the Montforts cannot bear the admission of lower-class people into their circle. As the novel continues, we see that Sam's children sink socially in Australia. Again, Boyd reveals his ill feeling towards the middle class: because Sam marries beneath him, the entire family eventually suffers. It is one example of the decline of the aristocracy in Australia, the favoured class of Martin Boyd. Of course, the cause of this decline may not be as simple as it is presented in the novel. However, such is Boyd's verdict concerning the pernicious influence of the middle class.

Sim's marriage with Jane, a girl from the same class as the Montforts, would appear more suitable in Boyd's framework. When Sim proposes the marriage to Captain Wynch, Jane's father, the latter gives his ready consent, thinking that Sim is a suitable husband for his daughter:

> . . . he knew that Simon was a man of considerable substance and would probably do the handsome thing by Sim. . . . Sim was the future Montfort

> of Farleigh-Scudamore and, if he wished, could take up his position in the county of Somerset. . . . (M, p.55)

However, Simon has a different view of events. His main interest is in the development of the new colony. He does not approve of Sim's engagement because he thinks that Sim's early marriage will not make him "a useful colonist" (M, p.56). Simon's objection to Sim's marriage is based on his conviction that Sim should "harden off" on the land before he gets married since he has inherited his French grandmother's delicate features, which, to Simon's mind, are disadvantageous in being a useful colonist. However, he gives his endorsement to the marriage when the young couple agree to return to Australia and to work on the station. After all, their family backgrounds are the same. As the novel develops, we see Sim become the head of the Montforts, after which the Sim Montforts go back to England and Sim assumes "the position of head of an ancient county family" (M, p.104). One might conclude that Boyd approves of the aristocratic alliance, particularly when it is contrasted with the Sam-Flossie marriage. Boyd also dramatizes his views through the marriage between Amy Montfort and Thomas Allman, one of the gold-rush immigrants of the 1850s. Henry and Letitia discuss this marriage:

> "But is he a gentleman?" Letitia had cried.
>
> "Well, in Australia, yes," said Henry.
>
> "But she could never take him home. He would be like old Skinner, who was given a baronetcy on the condition that he never settled in England."
>
> "There is no likelihood of Amy's returning to England for many years. I might confess that he is scarcely the young man I had hoped for as a son-in-law, but he is hard-working, sober, and industrious."
>
> "It sounds like a reference for a butler," said Letitia acidly.
>
> "He will undoubtedly be a citizen of substance and repute," said Henry sternly. (M, p.59)

Here, we see that Letitia is openly contemptuous of the people outside their circle. She regards Allman as a "butler" and thinks he is not eligible to be a son-in-law. Though Henry gives his consent to the marriage, he agrees that Allman cannot be an ideal son-in-law. His consent is founded only on the fact that Allman is hard-working. The gold-rush has in fact been making its impact on the Montforts, threatening their social position. However, they still want to maintain this, thinking that they deserve it. Probably Henry hopes that the alliance between his daughter and Allman might help to preserve the position of the Montforts. As the book progresses, we can see that Boyd does not approve of the Allmans. Sim writes his book, in which he reveals that Allman's grandfather used to be a bootmaker.

Allman refuses to tell Sim the truth about how he looks after Jane's Australian estates: "There [is], in particular, a sum of six hundred pounds of which he [refuses] to give an account"(M, p.91). Allman's sons are hard-working like their father. However, their cousins do not want to associate with them. Clearly Boyd has deliberately contrived this opposition between the Allmans and the other Montforts. Amy Allman criticizes Jane on her selection of Kenneth as her son-in-law. In her eyes, Kenneth is a useless man as he has no *profession.* In her reply to Amy's criticism, Jane tells Amy that Kenneth is all she requires, as he is a *gentleman.* Again and again, Boyd returns to his old concern with class and class values.

Ada, the youngest daughter of Henry and Letitia, is the symbol of their happiness. Letitia always wants to make something beautiful of Ada's life so that it can be "a compensation for her own" (M, p.62). Florez is the son of Don Gomez, from whom Letitia draws her inspiration. As a result of this inspiration, Letitia conceives Ada. When Florez proposes to Ada, Henry and Letitia consent readily. Henry thinks that it will be "a good match" (M, p.78) and Letitia that it is "exceptionally suitable that [Ada] should marry Florez de Moya" (M, p.79). In fact, Letitia has deliberately encouraged the young couple in their mutual affection. Don Gomez is also satisfied with this marriage. He thinks "the Montforts [are] one of the few Melbourne families with whom he [considers] it [is] possible for a Moya to make an alliance" (M, p.78). When Sim learns about the engagement, he goes to see Henry and Letitia and voices his low opinion of Florez. Henry turns a deaf ear to his criticism. Ada is a naive girl. After Florez's kisses and embrace, she thinks "the marriage must take place if she [is] to preserve her self-respect" (M, p.79), though she feels "more troubled than happy" (M, p.78). Should she reveal her secret to her parents, the wedding might be stopped. At the wedding, Ada feels that "every movement [is] an effort" (M, p.80). However, the rest of the people present all think it is "the most brilliant and satisfactory wedding" (M, p.80). As always, the Montforts are anxious to make an alliance with people of their own class. Although we learn, as the story continues, that Ada eventually dies in strange circumstances, Boyd does no more than merely suggest that Florez may have driven her to suicide. The fact that he does not want to state bluntly the cause of Ada's death may itself be regarded as underlining Boyd's sympathy for his favoured class.

Dora's marriage coincides with the forced return of the Sim Montforts to Australia. This forced return symbolizes the further decline of the position of the Montforts. On the voyage back to Melbourne, Dora meets a Mr. Riley, who pays her particular attention. She soon falls in love with him as she has never before

been treated as an equal, let alone a favourite, in the family. Soon after they arrive in Melbourne, Mr. Riley, a businessman who makes a great fortune in the 1890s, makes a proposal of marriage. Though Sim does not give his immediate consent, Riley's income of one thousand a year is appealing to him. After six months of consideration, Sim and Jane at last agree to the marriage to "one of this predatory class" (M, p.134). Whatever else, Riley will look after her interest. Boyd gives a vivid description of the wedding:

> . . . the guests were for the most part drawn from the few remaining pre-gold-rush families of the state, though here and there about the nave the light caught the gay bonnet or bald head of some owner of one of the stucco Italian palaces which during the last decade had sprung up over Toorak and Malvern. (M, p.136)

Earlier in the book, we were told that at Amy's wedding all but the bridegroom were "members of the pre-gold-rush families of Melbourne" (M, p.59). Both Amy and Dora marry men outside the circle of the Montforts. But the attitudes of the Montforts towards these two marriages are utterly different. With Amy's marriage, they are not satisfied at all. But with Dora's, there is the temptation to make an alliance with the newly-emerging and wealthy class. Through the contrast between these two weddings, Boyd suggests that the position of the Montforts is being threatened by the middle class, that is, that the middle class is gradually bringing about the downfall of the aristocracy in Australia. After her marriage, Dora mixes with middle-class people. She always talks about how much her friends have, which leads Raoul to think that Dora shows "lack of sensibility" (M, p.176). Through Raoul, Boyd voices his bitter hatred of the middle class and suggests that Dora betrays the interest of the Montforts, especially when she should be seeking to restore the reputation of the family.

Jane Wynch, wife of Sim Montfort, is a character with whom Boyd appears to sympathize. Through his depiction of her married life, the author comments on the disintegration of a family and on the cause which brings about this disintegration. It is when the family are living happily in England and carefully travelling around the world, that the bad news of the collapse of the banks back in Australia reaches them. Sim finds out that he is left with "a few hundred a year" (M, p.124). Sam, Sim's brother, suffers similar losses. On the latter, Boyd has his comment to make: " . . . with Sam's ruin [has] come a touch of disgrace. He [has], with more stupidity than villainy, become involved in the land schemes and [is] one of those blamed for the disaster" (M, p.124). Here Boyd suggests that the crisis is caused by middle class commercialism. So financial difficulties force Jane and her family to give up their easy and comfortable life in England and return to Australia. Once there, Jane's youngest daughter Dora marries a businessman, whose position in

society is "pretty vague" (M, p.129) to Jane. What is more, Richard's adultery with Aida is a shock to her. Ironically, this adultery is found out by Amy, who marries into the middle class. All in all it appears that middle class activities and values are largely responsible for Jane's sad life.

The novel is concerned with values in other ways as well, reflecting not merely issues of class but also of culture in the widest sense and, ultimately, religion. In Boyd's view, man can only attain to truth and beauty if he combines the spiritual and the material life. Boyd does not believe that man is born in a state of sin and, therefore, that he should sacrifice himself in order to please God. He argues strongly that this is not man's original nature in his travel book *Much Else in Italy*:

> Our bodies are the phenomena of noumena in the mind of the Creator, conceived by him in their desires and in every detail, beautiful, perfect, and good. The Hermes in the court of the Belvedereis as near as we can imagine to that perfect conception. Through an evil use of our intellect we impaired the integrity of our souls, and as a result our bodies too became flawed. Our whole aim is to recover that double perfection, and so that we might have the pattern, God re-created man in innocence, the Second Adam. (MEI, p,47)

However, the Montforts are preoccupied with guilt caused by the conduct of their ancestors. In the Prologue to the novel, we see the figure of the ancestress of the Montforts, Madeleine du Remy des Baux, who subsequently looms behind all the individuals of the family. Henry's grandfather Simon is a clergyman in the late 18th century. On a tour of the continent, he meets Madeleine du Remy des Baux, falls passionately in love with and seduces her. He then asks her to marry him, at which she is quite amused, as it would be strange for the daughter of a Remy des Baux to marry a Protestant clergyman. However, in order to secure the legitimacy of their son, Raoul, they marry when they meet again later. Because she cannot bear life in the quiet country manor house, Madeleine elopes with a cavalry officer, whom she leaves, eventually, to become the mistress of a peer. The result is that Raoul grows up with a sense of shame about his birth:

> Raoul felt that he might as well be illegitimate, and after that his soul was engaged in a quivering warfare with all that part of the human race which stood for justice rather than mercy, and for order rather than individual happiness. (M, p.11)

Raoul's spiritual legacy of guilt passes down to his younger son, Henry. Henry is obsessed with his father's "semi-scandalous origin" (M, p.12) and has no interest in his grandmother's romance. He grows up with "the sense of an anomalous position in the world" (M, p.12). His elder brother, Simon, who has settled in Australia for several years, writes to urge him and his family to move to Australia. Though the

picture Simon paints is quite appealing, Henry still hesitates whether he should go or not, as he already had a settled married life. However, he is quite clear that there is no bright future for a man like him if he remains in England because he knows that he is not brilliant and on top of this, he will always carry the burden of his family shame. So, after careful consideration, he decides to migrate to Australia with his family, hoping there to establish his own identity. Thus begins the story of the Australian Montforts.

In the novel, Boyd clearly disapproves of this character's rectitude. Henry is a judge of the Supreme Court in Melbourne.He enjoys a high reputation in the colony, but he appears to be a two-faced man. When he learns that Letitia helps arrange an elopement between Captain Blair and Caroline, he feels ashamed of his wife, thinking that his reputation is damaged in the public eye. "He felt as if some of the curse of Madeleine des Baux, the blight of frivolity on his family, had followed him to Melbourne" (M, p.48). Of course, Henry's position in the Supreme Court symbolizes the law of the state, the "justice" which Raoul in his mind had set against "mercy", and the "order" he had set against "happiness". His wife's misdemeanour damages his personal esteem and on top of that, it offends the law, his profession. Henry becomes "the laughing-stock of the law courts" (M, pp.47-48) and the Governor is "annoyed at the affair" (M, p.48). Henry's unwillingness to allow the happiness of the young couple, Boyd hints, makes it impossible for Henry to attain truth and beauty. Inevitably his rectitude in time is revealed as hypocrisy. Thus, on his voyage back from England, he makes love to a Miss Hetty Thorne, who is later called Mrs. Trevor, out of a sudden impulse. When Harry, the oldest son, learns it from Mrs. Trevor, he cannot imagine his father yielding to temptation. In the court, Henry is a respectable judge, but behind this facade he commits adultery. However, when he grows old, Henry begins to realize the contradictions in his position, and as judge knows that he himself is liable to judgement:

> In his hand he held a frond of bracken, with which he swished automatically at the cloud of flies which swarmed about him, and settled in a black patch upon his back. There was no other human being in sight. Henry uncovered his head, which had the massiveness of outline and expression that Simon had thought of as "leonine". Actually,his face had more of the sad nobility of a tired bloodhound. Henry was very tired. He looked at the beauty of the country about him, and thought how pleasant it would be to remain here, away from the terrible anxiety which must beset a conscientious judge. His sense of responsibility was great. He knew scientifically of the solar system, but he was not aware of it, of infinite spaces stretching beyond the ultimate stars. His mind, as he looked up at the evening sky, travelled no farther than the pink and yellow clouds, which filled him with a sense of awe for the majesty of God, the God who he had vaguely considered since childhood as dwelling somewhere

> in the glories of that sunset. Henry's world was finite, and in that finite world his own position loomed large, and it was the sense of its largeness, of his burden of responsibility, that gave him his air of bloodhound nobility. Some day, some day soon, a day probably far nearer than that of his arrival in Melbourne twenty-five years ago, he would have to answer to that God in the sunset for all his deeds, for the men he had sent to the gallows. His face was very grave and weary. (M, p.87-88)

Henry's realization of his hypocrisy as a judge is reinforced shortly before his death when he compares himself to a criminal he has condemned to death:

> Henry sat down and took off his collar. Still he saw the weak face of the murderer. His distinction of himself as one of the rulers of his finite world had become less clear to his exhausted brain. He had an awkward sense of relationship to this vile felon. The wretched man was the victim of his own uncontrolled impulses, impulses which in some degree were common to the whole human race. In the exercise of his duty he had become familiar with the spectacle of sin, but he had regarded it more as acquired than original. But to-day, the thought of the evil with which the nature of man was tainted from his birth obsessed him. His self-esteem was undermined. He found it difficult to regard himself as of a superior order of creation. He shared his human nature with the lowest criminal. (M, p.94).

Through Henry's realization, Boyd suggests that human nature is the same in everyone, whether in a criminal or a man with a great reputation. There is always some force which is beyond the control of man. Of course the criticism of Henry here is compassionate, since Boyd credits Henry with insight into his position. Unfortunately Henry's preoccupation with sin and his sense of guilt "prepares the way in the next generations for [Sophie's] austere piety and Jackie's eccentric puritanism".[4]

Boyd does not take sides regarding Sophie's religion. Rather, he shows its limitations and its strengths. Sophie Jane is obsessed with Christianity. She ignores her clothes and refuses to accept the more worldly standards of her society.Her only enjoyment is to go to Church and to visit the poor. When she is travelling with her husband on the continent, she receives a telegram telling her of her son Jackie's illness. Believing that God is punishing her because she is "a sinful selfish woman" (M, p.112), she vows to be loyal "to his service" (M, p.112) and so becomes even more pious than before.

As the novel progresses, we see Sophie become more and more obsessive in her beliefs. She condemns racing, thinking that betting and gambling are wrong, and even tries to refuse her father's invitation to the steeplechase. When her mother Jane criticizes her for her alienation from society, she declares that she wants to

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[4] Brenda Niall, Martin Boyd, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1974, P.10.

"accept the standards of God" (M, p.147). At a ball at Government House, Dora introduces a Mrs. Rodd-Morton to her. She tells her that Mrs. Rodd-Morton is rich and has a very beautiful house and even a butler. Sophie shows no interest in this. Suddenly, to Dora's embarrassment, she asks Dora whether she says her prayers regularly:

> "What a question to ask here!" Dora exclaimed.
>
> "God is here, in this room, as much as anywhere else," said Sophie. "If you open your heart to God He will show you where true happiness lies. It is not in butlers and carriages." (M, p.149)

In Boyd's view, this kind of religion is extreme and contradictory, since it denies the body. In *Much Else in Italy*, he reveals his idea of a genuine spirituality which takes account of material beauty through the narrator, who comments on the statue of the Apollo of Tevere:

> The eyes are reflective and the mouth is more gentle. It is not the Apollo who layed Marsyas, but it might be the shepherd of Admetus. The forehead is wide and the thick hair covers his head like a cap. His strength and vitality are assured. It is not an intellectual head, but something far better, that of a man whose spirit is one with the flesh. (MEI, p.41)

Sophie's narrow and ascetical religion extends to Jackie, whose peculiar personality is explored through Raoul's eyes in a way which anticipates the later innovative use of Guy Langton as a narrator-persona in Boyd's Langton novels. Through Jackie, Boyd further dramatizes his concept of a necessary unity between soul and flesh. In Raoul's eyes, Jackie is a trouble-maker. He often makes Raoul suffer by twisting his arms and hurting him for fun. Sometimes, he hurts Raoul with "religious instruction" (M, p.172). Such behaviour arouses Raoul's feelings of hatred towards Jackie. However, he finds Jackie's occasional moments of extraordinary gentleness difficult to understand. Once, the three brothers are invited to supper by Mrs. Farquhar. Since both Brian and Raoul have gone to have a picnic seven miles away from their home, Jackie walks all the way there through blazing heat to deliver the message, thinking that his brothers will be disappointed if they miss the supper, as "to go to supper with Mrs. Farquhar [is] a great treat" (M, p.117). So Jackie on the one hand enjoys bullying his brother and, on the other, demonstrates selflessness by walking in the heat to deliver a message. Because Jackie is unable to integrate his double personality, all his family except his mother fails to see him as a normal person.

On another occasion Mrs. Farquhar travels from Melbourne in the same carriage as Jackie and Brian. When they arrive at their destination, Mrs. Farquhar attempts to get off as usual. But to her surprise, Jackie holds the handle of the door.

"That is not allowed," he said. . . .

"Don't be silly, Jackie. Let me out," she said.

But he was firm, and clung to the door handle. Annoyed, but half-amused, she was obliged to go round by the long and legitimate route. (M, p.171)

Through Brian, Boyd voices his opinion of Jackie's conduct. Brian feels embarrassed at Jackie's abnormal behaviour and apologizes for it. It is yet another example in the novel of the puritanism the author abhors, even though some of its manifestations may be comic.

Jackie is fond of drawing. His room is full of sombre pictures, one of which is particularly depressing. It represents "a crucifixion, but with no face to the Christ, and on either side a schoolmaster and a butcher, as the cherubs in a sixteenth-century picture, holding cups below the wounded hands" (M, p.178). In fact, Jackie is expressing his feelings of revulsion against a twisted society. We know that he is "at the bottom of his form in every subject" (M, p.178) in school. His schoolmaster does not like him because of his bad behaviour. He argues with his schoolmaster that everyone is equal before God. He implicitly compares himself to Christ and the schoolmaster to a butcher, expressing himself and his frustration in his picture, since he cannot find justice in society. Everyone except Sophie Jane thinks he is really mad. Sophie loves him because she can understand his "spiritual perception" (M, p.178). At the same time, she is sympathetic "with the intensity of feeling which [makes] him turn in passionate rage against what he [believes] to be wrong" (M, p.178). She merely thinks that the mode of expression of his feelings should be corrected. So she gives him a new Bible, urging him to "use his art in the service of God" (M, p.179) before he goes to learn drawing at the National Gallery.

Later, Jackie goes to England to continue his art studies. With the outbreak of war, he becomes "a conscientious objector" (M, p.192). Jackie's pacifism is founded on his religious understanding:

[Jackie] sent copies of some cartoons he had done for a socialist paper. In several of them appeared Christ on the cross, His head bowed and His face hidden by long hair. Under one of these crucifixions the Bishop of London was blessing guns. Another cartoon showed Christ, meek and wasted, wearing the uniform of a staff officer, ill-fitting and sagging round His bent shoulders. (M, p.191)

Kenneth is very angry with Jackie and refuses to read his letters or look at his absurd cartoons. However, Sophie Jane thinks that Jackie has done the right thing. The present war is a violation of human nature. Through Jackie's destiny, Boyd is

able to reveal his attitudes towards the war. We learn that Jackie later dies in prison as a result of his firm opposition to the war. In Sophie's eyes, he dies a martyr as he sacrifices himself, like Christ. There is a suggestion that Jackie is a victim of the law of the state, of laws imposed by men. The theme of the conflict between moral law and the law of the state is further developed in *Lucinda Brayford* and the Langton novels.

The Montforts sums up Boyd's vision of social life in Victoria from the beginning of the colony to the end of the First World War. Through significant details and by highlighting certain issues, Boyd shows how the idea of a "complex fate" works out in the case of the Montforts. The Montforts belong to the ruling class in Australia. Because of social change brought about by the gold-rush, their position and influence are greatly undermined. Boyd sees this decline as being closely linked to the emergence of a powerful middle class. In depicting the attitudes of the family towards this class, Boyd reveals his own allegiance. The Montforts are attached to their old home in England. They come to Australia and in the process discover new values and a new culture. In describing this, Boyd makes clear his own position on Old and New World values and, in the end, on religious matters, including the questions of guilt and innocence, puritanism and pleasure. Unfortunately, because of his focus on family history, the author packs too many characters into the novel. This makes it difficult for any of them to be portrayed in depth. Implicitly, Boyd is already looking forward to his later novels, *Lucinda Brayford* and the Langton books, in which he further develops his ideas of the two worlds, social class and religion.

Chapter 2

Lucinda Brayford : an Initial Resolution

> No important things are useful. Art and love are useless and without one, the other cannot exist. The sufferings of lovers produce great music, painting and writing, and in people of no creative ability a refinement of soul which is pleasing to Almighty God.
>
> Martin Boyd

The publication of *Lucinda Brayford* in 1946 inaugurated the most important phase of Boyd's writing career. In this novel, Boyd takes up again the material first explored in *The Montforts* and returns to the family history, the Anglo-Australian theme, the class and the period that seem to be marked as his special interest. So in a way, *Lucinda Brayford* is the continuation of *The Montforts*. As regards structure, the two books are quite similar. In *The Montforts*, we can see a pattern of the search for the identity of the family. Dorothy Green describes the novel as "a succession of single waves, each of which gathers force, reaches a crest and then breaks, falling for a while into 'insignificant foam and ripples' until the next wave gathers and the process repeats itself as long as that particular line of waves lasts".[1] IN *Lucinda Brayford*, we find a similar pattern. First, William Vane and Aubrey Chapman come to Australia from England: the former is to search for money; the latter for fresh air, sunshine and a better position as well. Their search ends with the marriage of their children, Fred Vane and Julie Chapman. Soon after their marriage, the couple are faced with financial difficulties, which make them realize the importance of material wealth. With the improvement of their financial situation, Julie finds that material satisfaction has its limitations and begins her quest for what Boyd suggests is simple pleasure. Since she is not capable of discoveries in the cultural sphere, she places her hopes in her daughter Lucinda, who later marries Hugo Brayford, the younger son of an old English family who has come to Australia as an Aide-de-camp. Finally, Lucinda's son Stephen extends his mother's search and tries to discover the truth about life when Lucinda no longer has confidence in herself.

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[1]Dorothy Green, '"The Fragrance of Souls": A study of *Lucinda Brayford*', *Southerly*, vol.28, no.2, 1968, p.114.

to that of Lucinda Brayford

Although the pattern is similar, the emphasis is quite different. In *The Montforts*, the stress is on the history of a family. Birth, death and marriage are depicted in such a way that one senses the continuity of the family. Because of the emphasis on family history, the novelist has little opportunity for detailed study of his many characters. In *Lucinda Brayford*, Boyd shifts his interest onto the characters themselves. He restricts the focus of the novel to the period treated in the last part of *The Montforts*, from the 1880s onwards. This chapter will concentrate on the searches of Julie, Lucinda and Stephen for values. However, we may note at once that Lucinda's quest remains central throughout, with the other two providing comparison and contrast. In this search for values, Boyd reveals his ideas of the nature of happiness, of the meaning of life and of the dissimilar worlds of England and Australia.

In his search for the nature of happiness, man always pursues material wealth in the first instance. However, for Boyd, the nature of happiness lies beyond the material. In Part I of the novel, the novelist dramatizes this theme through the activities of Fred's generation, from the point of view of Julie, Fred's wife.

As Boyd depicts her, Julie Chapman is interested first and foremost in material values. She marries Fred Vane, believing that "Fred's sumptuous, inaccessible background" (LB, p.13) will bring her happiness. Her firm belief in the importance of material values is further strengthened through her experience of hardship and humiliation soon after her marriage. Through Julie's experience, Boyd indicates that poverty is one of the barriers to happiness. After returning from their honeymoon, Julie and Fred find out that William Vane has committed suicide because he was heavily in debt. Immediately they are faced with financial difficulties which force them to move to their homestead at Noorilla, where a hard life awaits them. Julie spends "the first night in weeping" (LB, p.16) as the harshness of the place is beyond her expectation. To add to her wound, Fred ignores her sorrows and treats her as "an hysterical fool" (LB, p.16). The fact is that poverty begins to take away any possibility of happiness in their marriage. As the novel progresses, we see that Julie and Fred cannot live in harmony and "often [snap] irritably at each other" (LB, p.18). To make things worse, Julie's social position is reduced to the lowest degree owing to their poverty. Boyd explores their position through the eyes of Miss Watson, who comes to help the family. Before she goes to Noorilla, Miss Watson thinks she is quite lucky to "associate with gentlepeople" (LB, p.18) like the Vanes. But to her disappointment, Fred Vane is "not more cultured" (LB, p.20) and Julie hardly looks "like a lady" (LB, p.20) when she meets them. Miss Watson is even suspicious of the identity of Julie and asks Julie if she is really Mrs. Vane.

Poverty not only destroys Julie's social position, but also brings her marriage with Fred to the brink of ruin. Drought symbolizes the deterioration of their relationship. Julie hopes that Fred will no longer carry on, will have to give up Noorilla and take them back to Melbourne. But Fred does not believe that he will fail. His only aim is, "to face a tough contest with circumstances and to wrest his inheritance from ruin" (LB, p.17). Their differences increase when Fred uses their last six hundred pounds to buy some thousands of sheep, which for Julie is a waste of money. Miss Watson shows her indignation on Julie's behalf:

> "You are a wicked, cruel man!" she exclaimed. "You don't think of anyone but yourself. This is no place to keep a lady brought up like Mrs Vane was, and now you go and spend the last of the money gambling like your wicked old father. That's all it is, sinful gambling." (LB, p.25)

If drought is a symbol of the division between husband and wife, the rain is a kind of fertilization, which brings the couple together. Just when Julie totally loses her confidence in Fred and makes a plan to leave the station, it begins to rain. Now the situation is dramatically changed. The rain suggests that Fred will achieve success and it changes Julie's view of her husband instantly. Now, to Julie, Fred looks "so beautiful and so happy" (LB, p.28). With the coming of rain, the couple are reconciled to each other and Lucinda is conceived as a result of this reconciliation.

The circumstance of Lucinda's birth is quite similar to Ada's in *The Montforts*. Letitia conceives Ada in a moment of happiness inspired by a conversation with Don Gomez when she is disappointed in her new surroundings. Boyd suggests that both Julie and Letitia expect happiness through their children. Letitia always thinks that Ada's life should be wonderful, but the fact turns out to be different and Ada dies in strange circumstances. Through Ada's tragic life, Boyd suggests that promise does not necessary mean fulfilment and there is always a gap between hope and realization. But because his major concerns in this work lie elsewhere, he does not ponder the significance of this. So it is natural that in *Lucinda Brayford*, he should take up the same motif and explore further the significance of the notion of a tragic gap between promise and fulfilment. In Julie's view, Lucinda's marriage with Hugo is a great achievement - an achievement Julie has always dreamed of and associated with happiness. As in the case of Ada, however, reality does not always accord with hopes and dreams.

Through Julie's attitudes towards her husband, who has not only survived the drought but also made a great fortune, Boyd suggests that success can bring happiness, if only of a very limited kind. With the increase of their income, hardship gradually gives way and smiles begin to appear on the faces of the Vanes.

Love now returns to Julie and Fred. Julie admires "success more than anything" (LB, p.29) and is proud of her husband, whose success will bring her happiness and enhance her sense of her own importance in society as well. Indeed, life has taught Julie a good lesson. If Julie's sense of the importance of material values was superficial when she first married Fred, now her realization of it is deeper and more complete. She is deprived of self-respect and happiness when she was forced to go to Noorilla, which becomes a symbol of shame to her, and something she intends to efface completely.

Material wealth has laid the foundation for happiness in the Vane family. For Boyd, however, happiness lies beyond material values. As he portrays her, Julie is not the kind of woman who can be satisfied merely with material comfort. She needs to enjoy herself. However, Boyd suggests that she does not know how to do this. But England being a place with a long history of civilisation, it occurs to her to go there and see for herself what it is like. Yet when her husband refuses to let her go there and suggests that she go to Colombo instead she has no objection and is willing to accept his offer. Here, Boyd seems to indicate that Julie does not understand the real value of culture and tradition. All that she is interested in is simple pleasure or diversion. In Colombo, Julie meets Maitland, an Oxford anthropologist, who is knowledgeable and inspiring. He tells Julie about all sorts of marriage customs and sexual rites in primitive cultures, thus opening a new horizon for her:

> All the things he had told her seemed to be part of his love-making, and she in turn seemed to become part of the whole natural world, of the cinnamon-scented forest, the smooth rocks and the brilliant sea. (LB, p.37)

Inspired by Maitland, Julie has an affair with him. She enjoys the pleasure it brings and fails to "foresee any further result" (LB, p.36) of it. But she conceives Bill in her love-making with Maitland, thus sowing the seeds of her opposition to the marriage of Bill with Anne Maitland, Bill's half-sister, later in the novel. The consequence of Julie's thoughtless action later prompts Lucinda to delay a decision to make love with Pat. Nevertheless, there is a positive element in the Colombo affair. After all, Julie is excited by Maitland's extensive knowledge of the world, a world of which she is quite ignorant. But even her excitement, which in someone else might have been the first stirrings of a life of the intellect, a genuine engagement with cultural matters, does not take her beyond the desire for immediate gratification. Although in her affair she recognizes something beyond materialistic concerns she cannot reach it and, significantly, physical fulfilment later causes problems for her son's happiness.

In fact Boyd shows Julie's life in general to be based on limited values. For example, Julie wants to enhance her position as a leader of society, but she cannot fulfil her role there. She wrongly believes that by travelling to England she can consolidate her position in society and that by moving to Tourella, a magnificent Italianate mansion, she can live as an aristocrat. However, when she moves into Tourella, she does not even know how to behave like a mistress. Boyd has this comment to make about Julie's sense of importance:

> Although Julie had acquired an added sense of importance on occupying Tourella, it was the naive importance which a child feels on its birthday. (LB, p.89)

Julie cannot but be conscious of her gauche behaviour. Though she has gained social status she has no sense of real culture and tradition. When Tony Duff, a young dancing partner of Julie's, is attracted to and falls in love with Lucinda, Julie thinks that the situation is simply ridiculous. Though Tony comes from a good family, Julie only wants her daughter to marry into the aristocracy, as a means of further enhancing her position. So she tries hard to separate her daughter from Tony. By doing so, she again illustrates her obsession with social status.

In the novel, the level of experience and understanding reached by Julie is important mainly because it prepares the way for Lucinda, who happens to marry into the ruling class in England. From Julie's point of view, Lucinda's marriage with Hugo, a representative of the aristocracy, is a great achievement. However, Lucinda does not think so. In Boyd's characterization, Lucinda has a kind of special quality:

> From her childhood Lucinda had shown a composure and sensitive charm which had marked her as a natural aristocrat. It became a kind of superstition in the family that Lucinda was so exceptional that her future would be distinguished. Her physical texture, her hair and skin, were delicate and flower-like. (LB, p.41)

In fact, Lucinda's special quality is somehow idealized. But Boyd uses it as a means by which to show us that even people like Lucinda, who do not have to worry about material things and social position, cannot always find real and lasting happiness. From Julie's point of view, Lucinda has got what her mother has never quite achieved herself. Even so, there is something more to be desired: "there is a tragic gap between promise and fulfilment and . . . what the world sees as promise and fulfilment are not necessarily so".[2]

Boyd thinks that happiness is closely linked to innocence. Early in life, Lucinda has a simple, natural happiness. Her innocence is mainly portrayed through

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[2] Dorothy Green, "'The Fragrance of Souls': A Study of Lucinda Brayford', Southerly, vol. 28, no. 2, 1968, p. 112.

her relationship with Tony Duff, who is very sensitive to everything Lucinda does. To Tony, every sign and gesture Lucinda shows is love. Indeed, Tony is obsessed with his love for Lucinda, longing to marry her. However, Lucinda is not really conscious of his intentions. She loves Tony because he helps her to discover the beauty in their surroundings. To some degree, she is attracted by the beautiful scenery surrounding her rather than by Tony. When Tony tells Lucinda that Julie wants them to be sensible, Lucinda seems uninterested and does not understand Tony's implication that there is something between them. Once Lucinda has a conversation with Tony about the design of the "White House". Tony tells her that he is doing it for her. Lucinda misunderstands and asks him why he is taking so much trouble for them. Tony immediately corrects her misunderstanding with this remark: "It's not for us, it is for you, Lucinda" (LB, p.81). Indeed, Boyd presents Lucinda as an innocent girl, who does not realize what love means. In fact, Lucinda's feeling towards Tony is that of a sister to her brother. To her, their mutual love is natural. That is why Lucinda is happy.

Though Lucinda finds some happiness in her relation with Tony, she is not satisfied with it, as it only offers simple basic enjoyment of life. She wants to explore a new world before her. Julie may indirectly enable her to be aware of the necessity to experience a new life, a life which is more exciting though full of adversity. When Julie finds out that Tony is trying to win Lucinda's heart, she becomes worried that Lucinda may fall in love with him if she does not separate them. So she takes Lucinda to England to stay there for six months. Though Boyd does not show us that Lucinda has benefited a lot from the trip, there is a suggestion that she has "become more adult" (LB, p.105). In other words, this trip gives Lucinda a good chance to see a new world, a world which is fascinating and exceeds the bounds of imagination. It is for this reason that she believes that Tony has exploited "her ignorance of life" (LB, p.118) when he proposes to her. The refusal of Tony's proposal marks a turning point in Lucinda's life. It is true that Tony is not a suitable match for Lucinda as he is thirteen years older than her and his family is not as rich. More important, in refusing Tony, Lucinda leaves behind the innocent world of her girlhood. But Boyd shows us that she does not realize what she has done to Tony until she steps into her new world and experiences the sorrow and bitterness of life.

Lucinda's marriage with Hugo takes her into her new world, a world in which she did not expect that she would experience sorrow. In order to enable us to understand why Lucinda fails to find happiness in marriage, Boyd examines her attitude and Hugo's towards love. We may recall that in her relationship with

Tony, Lucinda never takes any initiative. Boyd never communicates her thoughts to the reader. However, things are quite different when she meets Hugo Brayford. She feels "as if her bones were melting" (LB, p.115) when she dances with him. She has never experienced anything like this sensation before and is overwhelmed by Hugo's physical beauty. Boyd gives a detailed description of Hugo when he first appears at the Government house party:

> A tall young man, rather heavily built, with a sanguine face, light blue eyes and crisp golden hair, detached himself from the group and came over to Lucinda. He had blue lapels and gilt buttons on his dress coat. He looked extraordinarily clean. (LB, p.112)

Lucinda marries Hugo for love. When her mother Julie says that she is marrying into Hugo's family, she is very angry and protests that she is not attracted by his family background. However, Boyd does not indicate to us why Hugo is attached to Lucinda. But he does hint at Hugo's motive for marrying Lucinda when Hugo asks Lady Wendale about Lucinda's background:

> "Is that Vane girl rich?" asked Hugo casually.
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> Lady Wendale laughed.
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> "Her father is---quite."
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> Hugo appeared to digest this. Then asked, "What is her family?"
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> "Quantity or quality?"
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> "Well---er---both."
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> "She has a brother at Geelong---that's the sort of Eton here---and a sister who has just become engaged to a young doctor, though it's not public yet. When they marry they are to be allowed two thousand a year, which is I suppose what you want to know." (LB, p.120)

Hugo does not intend to marry an Australian girl. However, the wealth of Lucinda's parents is quite appealing to him. So to some extend, he marries Lucinda for her dowry. Lucinda does not see through his motive as she is temporarily blinded by his physical attraction, which sows the seeds of sorrow in later life.

Lucinda thinks that her marriage with Hugo will bring her happiness and believes that she is deeply in love with him. However, Boyd sees that she is someone who has just left her innocent world and stepped into another which is more complex than she expected. On top of that, Lucinda has to learn about life and make mistakes in order to advance in her search. In fact, Lucinda never experiences any excitement with Hugo in England. Instead, she becomes more and more disillusioned with him. Later, she realizes that her attitude towards love is

wrong, admitting that she has been influenced by Hugo's "princely background"(LB, p.212) and his physical beauty just as he has been influenced by her money. Her awareness of this is largely due to her suffering and her sense of the growing gap between her and her husband. On the voyage to England, Hugo spends a lot of time playing poker and loses a lot of money. When Lucinda shows her surprise, Hugo becomes annoyed. At the same time, Lucinda is pregnant and wants to tell her husband the good news. However, seeing Hugo is in a bad mood, she "[does] not care to tell him about the child"(LB, p.145). Back in England, Hugo does not spend his time with his pregnant wife. Instead, he travels and never cares about money. When Lucinda learns from the bank that her husband has overdrawn her account, she tries to deny the fact, pretending that Hugo would not be careless about money. However, Marian tells her that the reason that Hugo had gone to Australia was to "recover from a financial crisis" (LB, p.167) as he is "not economical in his habits" (LB, p.167). Arthur further suggests that Lucinda and Hugo should have separate accounts as he believes that "a joint account never works" (LB, p.169). This illustrates vividly the degree to which the couple have drifted apart. Indeed, when Hugo learns about the event, he is very angry and writes to tell Lucinda that he will not be back home for some time. Lucinda takes it as a sign of punishment for her.

Their differences reach a climax when Lucinda finds out that Hugo had a mistress called Mrs Fabian Parker before he went to Australia and that they still see each other quite often. In fact, she has been suspicious of Hugo since coming to England. Once Julie tells her that she happened to meet Hugo at the Ritz, and then dined with him, with Pat and a lady called Mrs Fabian Parker. Though she feels distressed at the news, she excuses Hugo for his conduct, telling herself that she has "no clear reason for jealousy" (LB, p.177) since her mother was there. Now the undeniable truth dawns on her. She can no longer deceive herself. When she reviews her marriage, she discovers that Hugo has "simply used her as a banker and a bedfellow" (LB, p.212). She becomes very indignant and after some consideration, writes to tell Hugo that she is going to divorce him.

Although her marriage with Hugo is a failure, Lucinda does discover that there are higher values than physical attraction in her new surroundings. The Brayfords belong to the aristocracy in England and have a strong sense of tradition, a tradition which is closely linked with culture and arts and which has a great influence on Lucinda. This aspect of the heroine's further exploration is mainly portrayed through Paul, who clearly represents Boyd's image of a gentleman. Through Lucinda's discovery of culture and tradition at Crittenden, Boyd continues to explore the nature of happiness.

The implication is that happiness is inseparable from culture and tradition. Boyd dramatizes this view through the effect that Paul has on Lucinda. Paul spends most of his time seeking pleasure. He accepts things simply because they are "clearly beautiful, true and highly civilised" (LB, p.171). He believes that ballet is "the most complete form of art" (LB, p.148), something which can make life more passionate. When Lucinda first meets Paul at Crittenden House, she feels a little surprised as she never expected that he would talk about painting and ballet - an impersonal subject. He talks with her about painting as if she "knew as much about painting as himself" (LB, p.148). In spite of her surprise, Lucinda feels uplifted, a kind of feeling which Boyd hints here is superior to physical attraction. Indeed, Lucinda had never known that life can be made more passionate by art. So, burning with curiosity she goes to see the ballet. She does not expect to enjoy the performance as she imagines that it may be beyond her comprehension. In the event, she feels "a quite extraordinary increase of excitement" (LB, p.150). As time goes by, she develops a kind of cultural taste. Crittenden House seemed to her "merely very large and rather shabby" (LB, p.153) when she first visited it as a schoolgirl. But now it seems to "breathe out age and peace in warm waves on the afternoon air" (LB, p.153). In fact, it arouses her excitement just like the ballet when she sees it. She communicates her changed feelings to Paul, who tells her that "it [is] the excitement of finding [herself] in the living stream of culture" (LB, p.154).

As Boyd sees it, the enjoyment of culture is closely linked to the ethic of the gentleman. This notion is explored through the description of the different values Paul and his sister-in-law, Marian, have. Paul is portrayed as an aristocrat, obsessed with the importance of his class. He believes that "the artist and the aristocrat are the only people worthy of consideration" and that "the rest of mankind should function merely to make their existence tolerable" (LB, p.160). Marian comes from a middle-class family. Her marriage with Arthur shocks old Lord Crittenden, who believes that "only the highest aristocracy [are] fitting brides for the Brayfords" (LB, p.160) and who soon dies from the shock. Marian does not approve of Paul's values and accuses him of being a loafer. As in *The Montforts*, Boyd does not have a good opinion of the middle class and he creates conflicts between Paul and Marian so as to convey his disapproval. Paul's hatred of Marian begins when she marries his brother, Arthur. When Paul is accused of being a loafer by Marian, he immediately retorts that Marian does not understand "the function of a gentleman" (LB, p.276), believing that, as a true gentleman, he is doing what he is required to do. Lucinda is constantly aware of their conflicts and Marian's ideas do not appeal to her. Clearly Boyd sees Lucinda as able to draw

strength and pleasure from Paul. Although Lucinda thinks that Paul sometimes goes to extremes, she believes that he is "more serious than the other Brayfords" (LB, p.171) as he seems "at all costs anxious to know the truth and what [is] of value" (LB, p.171). So under his influence, Lucinda more and more appreciates painting, music and ballet. When she listens to Paul playing Palestrina in the Crittenden chapel, she is greatly moved by the music and feels that she has been lifted to "another planet" (LB, p.171):

> She felt that she was subject to some power beyond herself and beyond the temporary advantages of men. In Melbourne she had not felt that at all---she had not felt that there was any power beyond Fred's cheque book. On that first afternoon when she had arrived at Crittenden she had had a hint of this feeling, but nothing to the extent to which it came upon her in the chapel while she listened to Paul. It seemed to her that only when one's life was linked to the beauties and tragedies of the past, as in this music and in this house, did it have any richness of texture, that only when one had accepted a background of pessimism did one's pleasures become civilised. (LB, pp.171-2)

Here, Boyd shows us that Lucinda is in the process of acquiring new values through the influence of a deeply-rooted tradition at Crittenden. This prompts a growing sense of family responsibility, which makes Lucinda more considerate of social position and the importance of the family. When she learns that Hugo is unfaithful to her, she at first intends to divorce him. However, owing to her connection to Crittenden, she becomes hesitant, thinking that she cannot make a clear break. In any case there are her parents, satisfied with her marriage with Hugo, to consider. Then comes the news that Hugo is wounded in the war. Ultimately, honour and the importance of the family lead Lucinda to give up her intention of divorce. In giving up this idea, she has become more mature than she was when she first married Hugo. In reviewing her marriage with Hugo, she has this comment to make about herself:

> Hugo had not changed essentially in the years of their marriage, at any rate not until he was wounded, only her eyes had opened wider to notice things which a young girl ignored. When one was young one was enchanted by a trick of speech, a gesture, the curve of a lip or an ear, and one did not take in the full significance of a moment's dullness of response, a hardness in the eye, the protective fat growing under the skin. (LB, p.273)

Although Lucinda now has a strong sense of 'family', she does not want to bury herself in the past. Unlike Paul, she prefers to live in the present, believing that the obsession with the past will keep her from perfect happiness. In order to find her 'paradise', she makes two decisions: one is that her son Stephen should not go to "Eton, nor to any English public school" (LB, p.275), and the other that she should contact Pat. These decisions reveal that, in spite of everything, Lucinda is not satisfied with her life at Crittenden and that she is anxious to free her son and

herself from what she perceives as the bonds of tradition. Thus, she begins to search for yet another life, a life which can offer her not only enjoyment of culture, but also love.

Boyd sees that Lucinda's new search will lead her nowhere as she has no clear sense of direction. Indeed, what Lucinda is seeking is but a disguised physical love. She mistakes Pat for her ideal lover. At the beginning of their affair, Lucinda feels very happy and enjoys "the secrecy of her meeting with Pat" (LB, p.295). However, as time goes by, she fears that her meeting with Pat will become a routine. She feels that she gets physical excitement but no intellectual pleasure from Pat. Worried that her relationship with Pat will come to an end, she persuades Pat to go to St. Saturnin, a beautiful place with sunshine which reminds Lucinda of her childhood paradise at Flinders in Australia, hoping that she and Pat can live a perfect life there. However, Pat refuses to go. Instead, he asks Lucinda to go to Crittenden, a place that Lucinda now wants to escape. There is a suggestion that Pat does not understand Lucinda's needs at the moment. In the end, the affair with Pat fails. It fails partly because of Lucinda's ignorance of the complexity of the world. In fact, Lucinda finds out that "Pat [is] exactly the same type as Hugo, more sympathetic in manner perhaps, but less direct" (LB, p.362). She has suffered in love and feels that she is "half dead" and "may as well be buried" (LB, p.360). Although she has an environment which her mother Julie thinks makes life perfect, she still cannot find happiness. Through the embittering experience of her life in England, she has become a shallow society woman. Since she has lost confidence in life, her search cannot continue. So in Part four of the book, her son Stephen carries on what his mother has left unfinished.

It is said that the story of Stephen in Part Four cannot be integrated into the story of Lucinda as Stephen becomes the dominant character in the final part of the book. However, Dorothy Green argues that the novel has a strong logical unity.[3] Indeed, Stephen's search for the meaning of life is important because it becomes a mirror in which Lucinda sees the course of her own life and through which she realizes its meaning and is able to carry on her search for truth, at least vicariously.

In order to enable us to see why Stephen can carry on and complete his mother's search, Boyd initially focuses on his aesthetic values. Like his mother, Stephen has been exposed to the influence of Paul and has also developed artistic taste. He appreciates his surroundings for their traditional associations. Unlike his

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[3] Dorothy Green, '"The Fragrance of Souls": A Study of Lucinda Brayford', Southerly, vol. 28, no. 2, 1968, p. 112.

mother, he is full of confidence in the future. He believes that "all life is beautiful and innocent" (LB, p.439). The love debate between Lucinda and Stephen illustrates Stephen's views on the way in which love is related to truth. When Lucinda learns that Stephen is going to marry Heather, who is conscious of social importance, she cautions that he should be careful as she herself could not see things and people as they really were before she got married since she was wrapped in "rosy mists" (LB, p.412). However, Stephen does not agree:

> You seem to suggest that if a thing is beautiful it's impossible, or rather that a beautiful thing can't exist, but is only the result of a rosy myopia. I believe that when you see a thing like that you see its true nature, as it's meant to be. Your love for it gives you the power to see it truly. We all know that we could be different from what we are, but we can't make the effort. No one has any faith in us. Then someone comes along and sees us in a rosy mist. They see the real self that we know we should be, and while they see us like that we become it. We can't help ourselves, partly because we're so grateful to them, and partly because we're ashamed not to be what they see. You have to be in what you call a rosy mist to see the significance of whatever you look at, whether it's a tree or a building or a person. If you only concentrate on its material substance like a so-called scientist, you're not seeing it at all. You have to be in a rosy mist to create anything worth while, as Paul said that day when you came up to Cambridge and he told Roland to look out of the window at King's. I think you'd be much happier before you were thirty, and wrapped your bald-headed friend up in his rosy mist again. (LB, pp.412-3)

What Stephen has said expresses his point of view about life and love. He sees love as the way to truth because for him truth is not cold objectivity, but strong feeling. His attitude is due in part to his experience at King's College chapel. Although he does not read for Holy Orders, he believes that Christianity, through its art and liturgy, is still a living tradition, which is able to impart higher values. Once Stephen takes Lucinda to evensong. He experiences "intense happiness" (LB, p.390) and then communicates his feeling to his mother. To his disappointment, Lucinda finds it amusing and tells Stephen that "all those cathedral kind of services are admittedly only musical performance" (LB, p.391). Through Lucinda's indifference to the church music, Boyd suggests that Lucinda has lost something of her spirit while Stephen is full of vigour, searching for fulfilment in every possible way.

Boyd sees that although Stephen has a better understanding of life than his mother, he is still prone to error as he is inexperienced and liable to be threatened by the philistinism of modern life. Like his mother, he has to learn to conduct his search through mistakes and suffering. Boyd explores the theme through the description of Stephen's marriage with Heather. Stephen's marriage turns out to be a repetition of Lucinda's. When Stephen sees Heather, he feels very excited, believing that she has "a spring-like quality" (LB, p.398). He falls in love with her

at first sight. When she realizes that Stephen cares about her, Heather is "elated beyond measure" (LB, p.400). In fact, Heather is only attracted by Stephen's grand background:

> Heather, on her way to Europe, had been more excited at the prospect of seeing Stephen than any historic building or the shops of the Rue de la Paix. Lucinda had always been regarded by the Vanes as a unique member of the family. Stephen, as her son, had inherited some of this regard, but it was enhanced by the fact that he would also inherit a peerage. Whenever his name was mentioned at Tourella his Australian cousins at once looked interested and rather proud. (LB, pp.399-400)

Indeed, Stephen and Heather have nothing in common. When Stephen plays the organ to Heather, hoping she will enjoy it, she actively dislikes the evensong - to his disappointment - believing that she is being humiliated. When Stephen tells Heather that Paul does not approve of Lord Fitzauncell, whom Boyd takes pains to link with Hitler in the novel, Heather laughs, considering it "ridiculous impertinence [on the part] of a man like Paul not to approve of anyone so rich, so successful, so famous as Lord Fitzauncell" (LB, p.448). Although Stephen does not see eye to eye with Heather, he chooses to make love to her as he believes that "physical contact could swamp any merely intellectual disagreement" (LB, p.448). Here, we see that Stephen is making the same mistake as his mother did. He takes physical love as a key to happiness. Boyd again shows us that physical love cannot bring more than a momentary pleasure. Ultimately, Stephen's marriage fails, partly because, like his mother, Stephen is not able to grasp the complexities of society and of life in general. But, unlike his mother, Stephen does not lose hope because of his failure. He decides to study at the Royal School of Music. The suggestion is that, as a student again, Stephen will continue his search for the meaning of life.

Although war is an evil and destructive force, it can awaken the conscience of human beings. Indeed, the Second World War is a kind of catalyst which speeds up Stephen's continuing search for higher values. Like Jackie in *The Montforts*, Stephen is also a conscientious objector to the war. But, unlike Jackie's protest, which is based on fanaticism and the denial of human values, Stephen's is based on an affirmation of life. The reason for this difference is that "Boyd's presentation of the conscientious objector forms part of his critique of puritanism"[4] in *The Montforts*. In order to present Stephen as someone whose values are different from Jackie's, Boyd endows him with Christian belief, a belief which opens the door to spiritual experience.

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[4]Patricia Anne Dobrez, *Martin Boyd: the Aesthetic Temperament, a Critical Study*, Ph.D thesis, A.N.U., 1980, p.222.

Boyd creates in Stephen a character able to raise a protest against the war without the loss of idealism. Through the image of Stephen, Boyd indicates his solution to the problems of a decaying world. In fact, he began the novel in the early forties and finished it "on the day war ended" (DD, p.211). During this time his witness of the reality of the war leads him to grow more indignant at the authority, who declared the war and then hid themselves in safe shelters. He therefore regarded the novel as his war effort. Stephen represents his ideal, someone through whom Boyd is able to communicate his own feelings. Following his religious experience at King's chapel and the failure of his marriage, Stephen becomes more mature. He sees that the war is in violation of human nature. This belief is further strengthened when, in his rescue work at Dunkirk, he holds in his arms the dead choirboy he originally met at King's. Patricia Dobrez suggests that by embracing the dead boy, Stephen invokes an image of the Pieta.[5] One thing we should note is that Stephen clearly differentiates his rescue work from the war itself and regards the former as "a marvellous chance to do something worth while" (LB, p.504). Stephen's experience at Dunkirk stirs in him a spiritual turmoil and prompts a vision of the true nature of things:

> He examined the leaves and the delicate tassels of flowers. Absorbed in these things, he lost the sense that they were only a curtain concealing horror. They became for him the reality of life, its vital substance, against which the evil phantoms beyond might press, but which they could not wholly destroy. This tree obeyed its own law of being. It was defenceless against axe and fire, yet from a tiny seed it had grown to height and strength, and clothed itself with beauty.
>
> As he stood there, examining the tree, it came upon him with rapidly increasing conviction, that there was another law of being than that which men obeyed. (LB, pp.512-3)

Like Henry Montfort, Stephen thinks that there is a law beyond the law of the state, that is, a moral law which man should obey. As he is now sure that the war is against this law, he decides not to fight. However, because of his refusal, he is put into the military prison at Aldershot, where he is brutally tortured. No matter how he suffers, he never gives up his belief that the present war is in violation of human nature. Here, we see again an illustration of Boyd's notion of the conflict between the law of the state and the moral law. Boyd strongly resents the effects of the former on innocent people. In *Much Else in Italy*, when the narrator and the Irish boy are viewing the statue of Mithras sacrificing a bull, they have this comment to make:

> Is the bull the symbol of the innocent life on this earth? It is not predatory. It lives on grass. It does not kill unless infuriated. It lives

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[5] Ibid., p.227.

> peacefully according to its nature and the laws of the Creative Noos. But here it is attacked by a dog, a scorpion, and a snake; an animal that hunts for pleasure, a deathly insect, and the reptile enemy of mankind. Does this express a dim apprehension of the eternal sacrifice of Christ? (MEI, p.33)

For Boyd, to sacrifice the bull is to sacrifice the life of innocence which is the source of happiness. In *Lucinda Brayford* he specifically identifies Stephen's sacrifice with Christ's crucifixion. When he is in prison, Stephen experiences the conflict between good and evil. He used to regard everything as good and beautiful. Now he realizes that there are evil things in the world. So he uses non-violence to fight for justice. Though he suffers physical pain, his worst suffering is in the mind. When Lucinda asks what is wrong with her son, the doctor says that he does not know and suggests that "it is largely psychological" (LB, p.536). At last, Stephen dies of heartbreak.

This death is not the end of the book. Boyd argues that Stephen's sacrifice is worthwhile as it was for a just cause. He explores this theme through the awakening of Lucinda. It is not mere coincidence that Lucinda's spiritual enlightenment finally comes in King's chapel. In her sorrow and desperation, she wanders into the chapel, the place which she did not like when Stephen took her there for evensong. At that time, she had been surprised by the "intense happiness" (LB, p.390) the service obviously inspired in Stephen and by his apparent intimacy with a choirboy. Now, in the quiet of the chapel, she is stimulated to work out the meaning of her son's death:

> Paul was too convincing a prophet of disintegration. Often he amused her by his assumption that he alone stood upright in a world of moral ruin, but today she could not bear it any longer. It could not be true that good was only in the past. It was true that now men were cruel and dishonourable, but had they been less cruel and dishonourable in the eighteenth century? Paul took the best men of the past and compared them with the worst of the present. To-day more than ever she felt the need for some faith in the future, for others if not for herself. (LB, p.544)

This reverie on her son's death implies Stephen's moral superiority over Paul and his world. Like Paul, Stephen cannot tolerate the idea that the world should be anything other than beautiful, true and good. However, he thinks that is not enough and goes on to discover that life becomes more meaningful in the presence of God. Spiritual love is eternal, though it may be imaged in his attachment to a choirboy. Boyd ends the novel with Lucinda full of hope. The choir and its song *Eya Resurrexit* evoke the magnitude of the universe and of life. When Lucinda sees a choirboy smiling to her and hears the choir sing *Eya Resurrexit*, she feels the same excitement that Stephen had experienced. She then realizes that Stephen has sacrificed himself for other human beings and therefore lives on after death.

How does this synthesis of cultural and moral values in the figure of Stephen connect with Boyd's old preoccupation with the idea of the Old and New Worlds? Like *The Montforts*, *Lucinda Brayford* is also set in Australia and England. When depicting the searches of Julie, Lucinda and Stephen, Boyd offers us a picture of these two worlds. Both in *The Montforts* and *Lucinda Brayford*, he represents Australia as a place with a dual characteristic of innocent beauty on the one hand and crudity on the other, while England is represented as a place where one is always conscious of the existence of history and civilisation. However, owing to the two world wars and the intrusion of the middle class, old traditions are being threatened and begin to decline, as we see through the experience of the Brayfords. It seems that the one world is not necessarily better than the other. As Dorothy Green puts it: "there is no attempt at all to weigh approval in favour of the old world as against the new."[6] In fact, though, Boyd thinks that there is yet another world which is better than both of these. He illustrates this through the experience of Stephen, whose world is closely connected with religion. In this sense, we can say that *Lucinda Brayford* ultimately is a religious book.

Australia is a vast and desolate country. Boyd shows us its crude side through the rising fortunes of the Vanes from impoverishment to prosperity in Part I of the book. The hard life of the Vanes on the sheep station symbolizes what the cruel nature of Australia can impose. Although the whole family works very hard, they cannot conquer nature. The hardness of their life is communicated through the experience of Miss Watson, a lady-help of the family. The first night when Miss Watson arrives at the sheep station, Julie provides a little "luxury" for dinner: "In addition to the luxury of tinned salmon, the cold mutton had been sliced and decorated with parsley in a silver entree dish, which Julie had smuggled up to Norrilla. There was also a vase of daisies on the table" (LB, p.22). Fred resents what his wife has done and warns Miss Watson that they cannot afford things like that every night. Miss Watson feels very sorry for Julie and does not think that she could possibly stay there. Later, Fred makes a success of things. However, Boyd has substantial reservations about his success. For a start, Fred's achievement is not the result of his hard work, but his luck through his "gambling" on buying the dying sheep. Through Miss Lanfranc, a daughter of Justice Lanfranc, Boyd suggests that "there is always an element of vulgarity in success" (LB, p30). This vulgarity is closely linked to the harshness of life in Australia, and Fred is its typical example. Fred values money more than anything else. With their increased wealth, the Vanes at last move into Tourella, an Italianate Mansion, which

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[6]Dorothy Green, '"The Fragrance of Souls": A Study of *Lucinda Brayford*', *Southerly*, Vol.28, no.2, 1968, p.117.

represents the values Boyd disapproves of in Australia. Tony's comment on Tourella best illustrates the writer's dislike:

> It was amazing how little of the real spirit of the Renaissance the architect had managed to put into the house. Every pillar and every piece of carved stone was nothing but an advertisement of wealth. (LB, pp.95-96)

Fred's vulgarity is further revealed at Lucinda's wedding party. Fred toasts several times with the remark "drink the health of my daughter, the Honourable Mrs Brayford" (LB, p.138). When the Vanes spend their holidays at Flinders, Fred asks his son Bill to tour the sheep stations with him. Bill refuses to go because "it will spoil his holiday" (LB, p.53). Fred is enraged as he did not expect that his wishes would be opposed and all he is concerned about is his sheep stations. The implication here is that people like Fred have no ability to explore the natural beauty around them and don't know how to enjoy pleasure. Throughout one has the impression that Australia is a materialistic world and that people like Fred care only about money and power seeking.

However, Boyd emphasizes that Australia has its own natural beauty. He conveys this feeling through description of the Australian landscape and its impact on the character of Lucinda. Flinders stands for the natural beauty of Australia: it is the place where Lucinda feels the greatest excitement. One day, the heroine spends the afternoon lying on the Tarpeian Rock at Flinders with Tony. Watching her brother playing in the water, she suddenly undergoes a vivid experience:

> Lucinda looked at Tony. She recognised that behind Bill's ragging there had been an impulse of sensuality, and again that seemed to her a thing to be accepted naturally, and less consciously she felt it to be an enrichment of life, and to contain some dim promise of a deeper relationship between Tony and herself. As she looked at him her eyes were full of candid and innocent acceptance. This glance was almost more than Tony could bear. His eyes darkened. She in turn was moved so that she looked away at the scene before her, and although she made no deliberate attempt to remember it, in that moment it was printed vividly on her mind and remained there for many years - the sea with its dazzling white horses, the hot expanse of the Tarpeian Rock, and the two sprawling sunburnt boys with their oranges - and she remembered always the feel of the cool wind as it caressed her arms and lifted her hair. (LB, pp.56-7)

This environment and the emotions it arouses form the natural world of Lucinda's girlhood. Although Lucinda's growing up coincides with the increasing material prosperity of the family, she is not contaminated by Fred's commercial philosophy. Through Tony, she discovers the beautiful world around her. This image of Australia recurs several times when she is faced with suffering in England. She loves the Australian landscape so much that before she leaves for England, she goes to the Christmas Hills with Hugo to have a last look:

> From its summit they had a view for many miles to the Black Spur and the mountains of Healesville, which were blue and gold and splashed with deep purple shadows. The hill was covered with gum saplings. The sun drew out the fragrance from the long summer. Strips of fallen bark and red sugar-ants seemed to add to the hot dry smell of the place. (LB, p.141)

It is against this background that the newly-wedded couple begin to make love and Stephen is conceived.

England becomes the background of the book after Lucinda leaves with her husband. Unlike the characters in *The Montforts*, Lucinda is not obsessed with the differences between the two worlds and therefore, she does not suffer from the problems of a "complex allegiance". Boyd's view of England is mainly explored through Lucinda's experience and observations there.

Paul represents the tradition and culture of England. He regards England as the "living stream of culture" (LB, p.154). In fact, it is through Paul that Lucinda becomes aware of the importance of family tradition and culture. At Crittenden, Lucinda experiences a way of life different from Tourella in Australia. She feels that she has a direct contact with history and art, under the influence of which she seems to discern a power "beyond Fred's cheque book" (LB, p.171). However, with the widening of her vision of the world, she begins to find the atmosphere at Crittenden oppressive. The implication here is that England has two sides: good and evil. Although it has a long history of civilisation, it is in a state of social and moral decline. The recent history of the Brayfords illustrates just that process. Hugo, after all, went to Australia because he wanted to recover his lost fortune. In short, he married Lucinda not because she was beautiful, but because she would bring him money. Arthur, Hugo's eldest brother, marries Marian, who comes from the middle class. The marriage does not conform to aristocratic values. Paul is obsessed with the past and becomes eccentric. Lucinda's son Stephen marries his Australian cousin Heather, who mistakes Crittenden for a paradise and Stephen as its earl. When she finds out that the Brayfords will turn her into a vicar's wife, she divorces Stephen and throws herself at a businessman. When Lucinda learns that Hugo has a mistress, she decides to have a divorce. Later she throws herself at Pat, but only to find out that Pat is another Hugo, who cannot share her intellectual tastes. She cannot find peace in England. It is on the French coast at St Saturnin that Lucinda feels free from the bond of the oppressive atmosphere at Crittenden. "The bright aromatic air [awakens] and at the same time [satisfies] a powerful nostalgia in Lucinda." (LB, p.301) Lucinda identifies St Saturnin with the world of her girlhood. However, Boyd suggests that her lost world cannot return as she is no longer innocent. When Tony writes to tell her that he will come to visit

her in England, Lucinda is happy and excited. Her happiness is due to the memory of her girlhood when she spent her time with Tony exploring the natural beauty around them. After many years of torment, she longs to return to her former world. However, when she meets Tony at the ship, she is surprised and can hardly recognize him. Indeed, Tony has changed a lot physically: "His skin [is] brown and wrinkled, and he [is] bald on top and at the temples" (LB, p.366). Lucinda has a curious feeling, which seems "more than half pity" (LB, p.366), for Tony. The implication here is that Australia is not what Lucinda saw when she was a girl. In fact, the meeting with Tony marks the end of Lucinda's search for happiness. Originally, Lucinda had placed some hope in Australia and intended to go back for a visit, but the reality disillusions her and she never returns.

What Boyd reveals in the novel is that there is another world beyond both that of Australia and Europe, a world which can offer something like real happiness. Through the description of the destiny of Stephen, he shows us that the road which Stephen takes is the one which leads to a spiritual world and that this is only way that Lucinda can find meaning in her life. The superiority of Stephen's world is illustrated through his relationship with his two friends, Hayman who takes Holy Orders in the Anglican church, and Roland, who is a communist and Spanish Civil war veteran, and also his relationship with his uncle Paul. In Boyd's characterization, Stephen, to some degree, has a better understanding of the spiritual world that the church purports to offer than his friend Hayman. When Hayman chaffs him about his attachment to the choirboy, he fails to grasp its true nature:

> It seemed to [Stephen] that his attachment, if it could be that, should remain one of the spirit, best expressed without words, which were but clumsy symbols, and could only coarsen or obscure those feelings which so far had been clearly and truthfully revealed to the exact degree in which they were valid. There must be people, he thought, with whom one's spirit was in complete accord. One often saw in the street, or in a train or theatre, a face which stirred feelings of friendship which could never be fulfilled, not only because there was no chance of acquaintance, but because, even if there were, there might be impossible gulfs of taste or material interest between the person and oneself. Only the spirit was in harmony. So he thought it must be with this boy. (LB, p.382)

Stephen's other friend Roland can only talk about Karl Marx and girls. He concludes that Stephen must have fallen in love with some girl when he fails to find him in his room. When Roland and Hayman meet, they quarrel bitterly in the presence of Stephen. The suggestion is that neither understands the true life of the spirit.

Although Paul represents European civilization in many respects, his way too, by comparison with Stephen's, leaves a lot to be desired. When Stephen

communicates his attitudes to the war to Paul, believing that Paul will support him, he is disappointed to find that Paul does not agree with him, but thinks that refusal of service in the army "belongs to the middle classes" (LB, p.514). Although Stephen tries hard to explain his ideas, Paul fails to understand him. Explaining proves to be a difficult task as it is due to "an experience more of the heart than of the mind, and too subtle, and even as yet, though intensely felt, too dimly understood to put into words" (LB, p.513). It is evident that Stephen's spirituality goes far beyond Paul's in the direction of a moral maturity and understanding. This explains why Lucinda is greatly inspired by and sees hope not in Paul but in Stephen.

Lucinda Brayford marks a great advance in maturity in Boyd's writing career. In the novel, Boyd is more interested in exploring human nature than in merely chronicling a family history. He analyses the process of Lucinda's transformations from an innocent girl to a sophisticated person of taste, then into a shallow society woman, and finally, through Stephen, into someone awakened to religious truths. Like everyone else, Lucinda cannot escape from the influence of her family and society. Although her parents provide almost everything and her marriage with Hugo ensures her social position, she cannot find happiness through social success and is disappointed in love. Towards the end of the book, however, her son's death awakens her and she begins to see meaning in life. Through the lesson that Lucinda has learned from experience and observation, Boyd shows us that complete happiness is beyond human achievement. Nevertheless, we can grow in insight, through pain and experience. Lucinda's journey to the Old World is indispensable for her intellectual growth because the New World cannot offer her a rich enough life. But it is a journey taken when that older society is declining. That is why in Europe Lucinda experiences both a higher appreciation of pleasure and a deeper understanding of pain. Although the book is very successful, it still follows the pattern and structure of *The Montforts*. After *Lucinda Brayford*, it was time for Boyd to try to find a novel approach, something different from both the other books. This new approach was undertaken in the Langton books after his Australian visit in 1948.

Chapter 3

The Cardboard Crown: the Quest for Happiness on Earth

> It is said that all mankind looks back to the golden age of Saturn: to most of us the golden age is not so remote. It is more likely to be our own childhood.
>
> Martin Boyd

Martin Boyd agreed that he had nothing more to write about his family after he had finished *Lucinda Brayford*:

> . . . a woman said to me: "You have said everything you have to say in *Lucinda Brayford*. What more can you write?" This struck me as a true and highly intelligent remark. . . . (DD, p.237)

In his argument with Kathleen Fitzpatrick on the function of an artist, Martin Boyd stressed that:

> . . . an artist's function is not a photographer's. It is by emphasis and omission, and if necessary by embroidery and reflection, to bring out the meaning of what he sees.[1]

This would seem to be his real motive in writing the Langton novels. In *The Montforts*, Boyd tried to "record and elucidate the phenomenon of [his] family".[2] However, owing to inexperience, it seems that he failed to fulfil his task to some extent as he did not allow himself space to ponder the significance of the events he described in the novel. So, in the Langton novels, he again returns to the family theme and uses "material [he] had wasted as a beginner".[3] As for *Lucinda Brayford*, its success is clearly due to Boyd's awareness of the importance of the study of character. In this novel, Lucinda's gradual growth to maturity is portrayed through the writer's careful analysis of the society in which the heroine lives and of the particular situations with which she has to deal. Thus, a vivid picture of the heroine is presented to the reader. In a way, *Lucinda Brayford* is more successful

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[1]Martin Boyd, 'Dubious Cartography', *Meanjin*, vol.23, no.1, 1964, p.6

[2]Martin Boyd, 'Preoccupations and Intentions', *Southerly*, Vol.28, no.2, 1968, p.86.

[3]Ibid., p.87.

than *The Montforts*. However, in scope it is limited as the emphasis is on the portrayal of Lucinda. So, to some extent, the Langton novels can be seen as an attempt to combine the merits of both *The Montforts* and *Lucinda Brayford*, and Brian McFarlane is right in suggesting that "*Lucinda Brayford* and *The Montforts* are the most obvious forebears of the Langton novels".[4] The completion of the Langton novels further illustrates Boyd's own writing maturity. In these novels, "with space to spread himself, Boyd at last finds the way to deal with his autobiographical materials: that is, not as a family chronicle but as a series of reflective explorations of the workings of a family".[5]

There is, however, another factor which prompted Boyd to write the Langton novels. In 1948, Boyd went back to Australia, hoping to settle down there. At the Grange, he happened to discover his grandmother's diaries. In the opening chapter of *The Cardboard Crown*, the author, through the narrator Guy Langton, expresses his intention of writing about the history of the family.

> Everyone can write one book. This would be my real book. I'd go on writing it until I die. (CC, p.13)

The elderly Guy tells his nephew Julian Byngham that "everyone can write one book" twice within a couple of pages. The implication here is that Boyd himself is anxious to write just this book. Indeed, the significance of the discovery of his grandmother's diaries is that Boyd found that there was an untold story in the family, a story which suited his taste and purpose. The fact is that in these family relics there were the values he had always appreciated.

In order to analyse what Boyd had done in the Langton tetralogy, an attempt has been made to divide it into two parts, connecting *The Cardboard Crown* and *Outbreak of Love* on the one hand and *A Difficult Young Man* and *When Blackbirds Sing* on the other. The reason for this division is that in each case we see the same pattern and structure. In the case of *The Cardboard Crown* and *Outbreak of Love*, both heroines find that there is some possibility of happiness on earth though they cannot attain to it themselves. In both novels, Boyd questions the traditional value of marriage. Both mother and daughter try to break out of the convention. Both identify Italy as the centre of Western civilization, a source of their happiness. We might well regard these, therefore, as Boyd's more hopeful novels of the tetralogy. *A Difficult Young Man* and *When Blackbirds Sing* are

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[4]Brian McFarlane, *Martin Boyd's Langton Novels*, Edward Arnold (Australia) Pty Ltd., Melbourne, 1980, p.2.

[5]Ibid., P.4.

mainly concerned with Dominic's story, in which the author is preoccupied with the Langton's quest for the identity, especially of Dominic in the former and the quest for a *spiritual* "home" in the latter. Boyd intended to write a fifth novel in the series. "Judging by clues scattered throughout the sequence - especially the allusion to the opening chapter of *The Cardboard Crown* - it would have carried the gloom of *When Blackbirds Sing* to its logical conclusion: a crucifixion."[6] However, he abandoned his plan, perhaps partly because of a dissatisfaction with modern publishers and partly because he did not know the answer to Dominic's solution himself.

The present chapter is concerned with the quest for the possibility of happiness on earth described in *The Cardboard Crown*. In Alice's search for happiness, Boyd shows us the kind of happiness she seeks and why she cannot fulfil her dream. Interestingly, Boyd again uses the two worlds of Australia and Europe as the background of this novel. At the same time, he clearly identifies Italy as the centre of Western civilization, though it should be pointed out that both Australia and England contribute to this discovery of Italy. The theme of the two worlds finds its fullest expression in the tetralogy. The Langtons travel frequently from one world to the other and this pattern suggests a more profound search for perfection on earth. *Outbreak of Love* continues the exploration of the Langtons' search for the happiness on earth in the younger generation, which will be dealt with in the following chapter.

Unlike *The Montforts* and *Lucinda Brayford* which are narrated in the third person, *The Cardboard Crown* takes us into the past, into the history of an Australian upper-middle class family in the nineteenth century, as told by a descendant. Guy Langton, who has recently inherited the old family home, Westhill near Melbourne, pieces together the history through the memory of his talks with Arthur Langton about 30 years before and his grandmother's diaries which he happens to discover in the old home. In the opening chapter of *The Cardboard Crown*, the reader's attention is immediately drawn to Guy's past, through the discussion of the family portraits at Westhill and of the dark strain of the Teba blood, through the idea of setting "adult experience to work on [one's] youthful memory" (CC, p.12), so that by the time we come to the diaries themselves we are as curious as Guy to find out the truth of Alice's story. There are two levels of truth which exist in the novel: one is buried in Alice's diaries, Arthur's talks with Guy and the family gossip; the other in Guy's interpretation of the family

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[6]Patricia Anne Dobrez, *Martin Boyd: the Aesthetic Temperament, a Critical Study*, Ph.D thesis, A.N.U., 1980, p.173.

mythology, that is, the truth in Guy's imagination. Therefore, the main role of Guy Langton is not merely that of a historian, but also of an artist, who tries to assert his own view of life through the re-creation of his personal experience of his family and his grandmother in particular. Though we cannot identify him with the author, we can see how closely Guy's ideas correspond to those of the author. Indeed, Boyd is not simply the recorder of a social class and its way of life. His chief interest lies in his search for the truth about the characters, and his recognition that, to some degree, this truth must remain elusive.

The Cardboard Crown covers a period of roughly the last forty years of the past century, but also has one foot in the present - or at least the narrator's present. The Langton family which Boyd describes in this novel belongs to the aristocracy, a class which possesses the values that he has always appreciated. In the opening chapter, Guy Langton half-seriously attempts a division of society into the Right and the Left, on the basis of attitudes towards money. He divides society vertically instead of horizontally. Normally, the social structure is conceived as a pyramid. Most people belong to the working class and the middle class. At the top of the pyramid is the aristocracy, entry to which is attained either through birth or marriage. The upper-middle class consists of government officials, lawyers, bankers, people with money and power. However in Guy's system, the social structure is quite different:

> At the top on the Right is the duke, and at the top on the Left is the international financier. At the bottom on the Right is the peasant - on the Left the factory worker. On the Right between the duke and the peasant are all kinds of landowners and farmers, all artists and craftsmen, soldiers, sailors, clergymen and musicians. On the Left side are business men, stock-brokers, bankers, exporters, all men whose sole reason for working is to make money, and also mechanics and aviators. (CC, p.13)

The basis for this classification is that for those on the Right, money is of minimal importance, whereas it provides the raison d'être of those on the Left. One consequence of this social classification according to attitude towards money is that "when a gentleman [sinks] socially, he [does] not just stop comfortably at a middle-class level, but [goes] plumb to the bottom" (CC, p.106), as Arthur informs Dominic later in *The Cardboard Crown*. Most of the characters depicted in this novel are on the Right in this sense. Only when we bear this in mind can we understand their behaviour.

Boyd's notion is that whether one belongs to the aristocracy or not depends on one's attitude towards money, not on birth. This idea is illustrated by his description of Alice's childhood story. From her childhood, Alice is trained not to regard money as the most important thing in the world. Alice's father, the younger

son of a Lincolnshire vicar, comes to make his fortune in Australia. He dies when Alice is young. Not long afterwards, her mother marries an engaging but dissipated younger adventurer named Drax. When Alice's aunt, Miss Verso, hears this, she comes all the way from England to rescue Alice for fear that Alice might suffer from the marriage. Miss Verso is a well-educated woman of the Right, anxious that Alice should form the most respectable associations. When she learns that Alice shares the lessons and games of the Mayhew and the Langton children, she is quite satisfied. Meanwhile, she is also careful not to reveal anything of Alice's new wealth, which Alice inherits from her father. In this way, Alice is able to avoid being classed with those "who [have] recently made fortunes at the gold-diggings, and now [drive] in fine carriages about the streets of Melbourne, where a few years earlier they had walked as kitchenmaids and pot-boys" (CC, pp.24-25). Hence, Alice is trained from childhood to take her place in a class which is not her own. In a way, Alice's childhood story is like a fairy tale. Nevertheless, it enables us to see how serious Boyd is in his attitude towards money.

Where can Alice find happiness? Boyd examines her choice of husband so as to illustrate where her happiness might lie. Alice believes that her choice of husband should be guided by love, not by money. In her eyes, Austin can be an ideal husband because he satisfies the criterion by which she defines her future happiness. Certainly, the young couple's mutual attraction is based on love, not on money. Austin falls in love with Alice not because she has money - according to Guy, Austin does not know that Alice is a rich girl - but because she is the most attractive girl he has ever seen. In order to avoid his parents' interference, he carefully conceals his meeting with Alice. Alice, on her part, is conscious that Austin's parents will disapprove of her because of the additional income she has inherited from her father. She therefore acquiesces in concealing the amount of time she spends with Austin. When Guy Langton recounts what Arthur has told him about Austin's marriage, he does not believe that Austin was influenced by Alice's money:

> 'He knew you wouldn't let him marry beneath him,' shouted Hetty. 'Everyone knows that her stepfather's a drunkard.'
>
> 'She has $4,000 a year,' Austin shouted back, while the carefully selected guests gaped, unable to keep up their pretence that this was a normal interlude. This is the part that I do not believe, but I must record it, as it is the only available evidence of an eye-witness. I used to think that Arthur disliked Austin because he was jealous about Alice, with whom he had a close life-long friendship. I found later that his attitude was very different. He concealed an intense loyalty beneath an affectation of malice. He used to say outrageous things which no one would believe about his brother, so that he might be counted as an enemy. Then, when he denied

those true facts which were to Austin's discredit, people would say: 'It can't be true, because Arthur denies it, and he would never deny anything against Austin if he could help it.' Anyhow, I do not believe that Austin mentioned Alice's money on this evening. But according to Arthur his father said:

'I hope you did not let that influence you.'

'I didn't know of it until an hour ago,' Austin replied.

'He did know. I told him long ago,' cried Hetty.

'Liar!' shouted Austin. (CC, p.33)

Why does Alice dare to go against convention and elope with Austin? Guy Langton offers his opinion:

It is possible that when she was young she enjoyed the follies of youth, and enjoyed giving society a slap in the face. (CC, p.35)

Their elopement itself reveals that the young couple seek nothing but happiness, and Guy Langton gives Miss Verso's response to it so as to reveal the author's endorsement of the marriage. Miss Verso is angry with the elopement, believing that she is being humiliated. She does not become reconciled to the marriage though "she would have been very pleased with the match if it had been normally arranged" (CC, p.35). Miss Verso is too rigid and conventional and her attitude is negative. In order to seek her happiness, Alice has to challenge this kind of attitude and the novel suggests she is right to do so.

In a quiet and peaceful world Alice might have found her happiness, as her ambition is moderate and reasonable. Like Lucinda Brayford, whose desire is to live in peace with someone she loves, she wants to have "une vie heureuse, même honnête et paisible" (CC, p.67). However, the couple are now living in an unstable and precarious world, a world which begins to threaten their happy existence. In particular, the threat comes from Hetty, who stands for those who are obsessed with material gain. By sheer will-power, Hetty destroys Alice's happiness and makes herself socially important. In order to let us see what kind of person she is, Guy Langton takes us into her past. Hetty always regarded Austin as her private possession. As a child, she took the cardboard crown when it was Alice's turn to wear it, insisting that Alice had no right to possess it. All through her childhood and adolescence, she believed that Austin belonged to no one else but her. This is important because it "justifies" her seduction of Austin later. Understandably, the marriage of Austin and Alice enrages Hetty, who is determined to do whatever she can to take back what she regards as hers. Indeed, according to Arthur, if she wants something, she is sure to get it:

> . . . as a girl she was terrifying. If you danced with her you felt that you were being dragged into the womb of the eternal mother. And that was if she didn't care a fig for you. If she was determined to have you she must have been irresistible, not because of her charm, but because of some super female magnet with which the Almighty had fitted her. (CC, p.70)

The first part of the novel centres on the way in which Hetty manages to seduce Austin and destroy Alice's happiness. It is clear that there is no love between Austin and Hetty who in Guy's opinion relies "more upon will-power than on love to secure the object of [her] affections" (CC, p.28). After Hetty first manages to seduce Austin on the voyage to England, she tries to persuade him to run away from Alice, who is still enjoying their honeymoon. When Austin refuses to do so, she threatens to let the secret out. However, she dares not do so as her real intention is to possess Austin and if she reveals the secret, she may lose Austin forever. So, when she finds out that she is bearing Austin's child, she seizes onto Percy Dell, whom she met on her voyage to England and for whom she had no regard at all previously, so that she can cover up the affair and still keep Austin. In the following ten years, she follows Austin and Alice from England to Melbourne, from St Kilda to Westhill, and manages to trap Austin again and again, to bear him a brood of sons. According to Arthur, Austin is one of the kindest and the most straightforward persons. Owing to the intrusion of Hetty, he becomes a man of fewer words and always feels guilty as he is afraid that what he has done will emerge. In this way, Hetty destroys both Austin and Alice's happiness.

Of course, in addition to Hetty's influence, there is another element which brings Alice unhappiness. As in *Lucinda Brayford*, Boyd elaborates the idea that physical pleasure can bring but limited fulfilment because it cannot last. The reason that Austin betrays Alice is largely that he enjoys physical pleasure. According to Guy's interpretation, Austin is more interested in Alice's outward appearance than her inner being. At the welcome party in his honour on his return from Cambridge, Austin's attention is immediately drawn to Alice as she is "far more agreeable to look at than Hetty" (CC, p.27). Guy Langton recounts what Arthur told him about Austin:

> Austin always liked the best of everything and naturally assumed that he should have it. It was inevitable that as soon as Alice came into the room, he should have eyes for no one else. Everything about her attracted him, he liked being surprised and she was a great surprise. Her clothes were very good. He always noticed things like clothes, the harness of horses and carriages. (CC, p.27)

According to Guy, Sir William's reason for disapproving of the marriage is that Austin shows "too great a love of pleasure" (CC, p.36). In short, he is worried that Alice may further encourage in this. Indeed, after the marriage, the couple

fully enjoy material and physical pleasure. Austin reveals to Alice his interest and capacity to spend on horses, clothes and so on, and Alice enjoys this revelation, so that her admiration for her husband grows. There is something missing in their life, however. Alice does not realize this until ten years later when she finds out about her husband's infidelity. She guesses what happened between her husband and Hetty on their first voyage to England:

> It must have begun, on the ship, when she was ill, in the first year of their marriage. . . . She was ill, she knew Austin's strong appetites, what it would mean to him, after the first rapturous months of marriage, to find himself deprived of his young wife. And there at hand was Hetty, who had always wanted him, ever since she was a child in the school-room, and had snatched the cardboard crown. (CC, p.69)

Alice sees some likeness between the young Austin and Praxiteles' Faun during her first visit in Rome. The implication is that Austin has no more soul than has the statue, "the spirit has evaporated and only the heavy flesh is left" (MEI, p.43). In this way, Boyd suggests that the failure of Alice's happiness is due to Austin's attraction to physical appearance, a shallow understanding of love and to Alice's naivety, as in the case of the early Lucinda, who fails to see the limitations of her husband.

Though Austin's attraction to physical pleasure in some respects causes Alice's unhappiness, Boyd does not ridicule Austin. As a matter of fact, his adultery with Hetty is not severely criticized. Instead, it is treated with some sympathy. From Guy's account of Arthur's story about Austin, we have an impression of Boyd's sense of appreciation of the two-sided nature of Austin and of things in general. On the one hand, Austin is "one of the kindest and most honourable men of his time" (CC, p.77). On the other, he constantly feels guilty of his adultery with Hetty and of being unable to confess it to Alice:

> 'He was ashamed of it. He hated the endless deceptions, especially of Alice, and yet he couldn't help being proud and fond of Hetty's sons. Poor old boy,' Arthur added reflectively, 'from twenty-two till the end of his life, there was no escape. Whenever he was in Australia which he felt was his home, much more than Waterpark, he was afraid that a bomb might explode under him at any moment, that his life and all his affections might be wrecked. By nature he was the most straight-forward man alive, yet he was always forced to to acquiesce in deceit, and for ten years to practise it even against his wife. It soured his open and generous nature. He became suspicious, wondering who might know about the scandal. He blew himself up into greater importance than he had, and as a kind of defence compiled a book of all the people in Melbourne who had convict ancestors, but he didn't keep it in Melbourne. It was in the library at Waterpark. . . . '
> (CC, pp.74-5)

Instead of an ugly portrayal of Austin, we are offered that of a sad and anxious man. This sympathetic portrayal reveals Boyd's recognition that physical pleasure can only bring limited happiness, but is not in itself wrong.

The sharp contrast between Guy's attitude towards Austin's adultery with Hetty and his attitude to Cousin Sarah further illustrates Boyd's view of physical pleasure. Sarah, the Langtons' Calvinist poor relation, does the housekeeping for the young Langtons while their parents are off in Europe for a visit. The problem with her is that she regards pleasure as sinful, going to the opposite extreme to Austin. Chris Wallace-Crabbe suggests that "it would not be exaggerating to say that she is portrayed as an Anti-Life Force, with large capitals: the force which imposes various degrees of spiritual blight on the imaginative Langton children".[7] Guy brings his adult experience to bear on his childhood memory of Sarah:

> Before bedtime she called [Mildy] into her room, that horrid little room which I myself remember, with its smell of vinegar and cough-drops, and its little black religious books, from which Cousin Sarah tried to teach us a religion which bore no resemblance to Christianity. There was no mention of considering the lilies, of forgiving harlots, of beautiful seamless garments and dining with the publicans, but only of Jezebel flung down for the dogs to lick up the blood. When I told Julian to paint the Assumption of the Virgin in the chapel, I think my motive as much as anything was to send the black ghost of Cousin Sarah and her hell-born Calvinism, shrieking out into the Australian bush. (CC, pp.110-111)

The lives of both Mildy and Dominic are constantly shadowed by Sarah's obsessive hatred and fear of the ancestral Duque de Teba, who had stamped his image so firmly on the family imagination, and by her bitter theology.

> There is no doubt that Sarah, by a thousand ingenious allusions, had made [Mildy] believe that there was nothing in the world more degraded, more absolutely bestial than irregular sexual love, or even regular. (CC, p.110)

Under the influence of Sarah, Mildy regards sexual love as sinful. When she learns about her father's adultery with Hetty from Sarah, she is shocked and completely loses her trust and respect for her family. In order to overcome Mildy's shock, Alice takes her on a trip to Europe. However, Mildy's response to art and culture is negative. Alice writes in her diaries: "She seems so ashamed of herself all the time" (CC, p.115); and: "Mildred is exceedingly shocked by the statues in the Louvre and yet she stared at them very intently" (CC, p.116). Mildy's natural sexuality has been suppressed and overlaid with coyness. In Guy's opinion, it is not Austin and Hetty, but Sarah who has ruined her life.

The discovery of Austin's infidelity is a great shock to Alice. But Guy does not choose to write about her spiritual crisis as he is too distant from it. Instead, he regards Austin's affair with Hetty as a liberation for Alice. Throughout the book, Guy is convinced that there exists a "close connection between evil and

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[7] Chris Wallace-Crabbe, 'Martin Boyd and *The Cardboard Crown*', *Melbourne or the Bush : Essays on Australian Literature and Society*. Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1974, p.43.

fortunate happenings" (CC, p.14) in his family history. But for knowledge of her husband's disloyalty, Alice would not have been awakened. According to Guy's interpretation, Alice's sorrows contribute to her joys. Thus we see Alice not as a defeated woman but as someone who is determined to seek her happiness through adversity. The conversation with Lady Langton recorded in her diary reveals this idea:

> Lady Langton and I had a long discussion about it [the decision to go back to Australia] this afternoon. She seems calmer now that we have made this decision. She spoke with sad resignation, but much more sensibly than of late. She said that we have to accept the inevitable changes in our condition - that our life at first is full of hope and beauty. Then comes a period of fulfillment, but it is very short. The same thing happens to every form of life, to trees, and animals and men. The branches fall, the fur becomes less glossy, and we feel pain in our joints and in our hearts. She also said that apart from these natural processes we enter periods of misfortune, when the fates turn against us. Wisdom lies in recognizing when this has happened. It is no longer of any use trying to impose one's will on life. I did not agree with this and said: "Surely no adverse fate can work against us if we are Christians?" She replied that God himself may send us misfortune. I disagreed even more strongly. I said: "All evil must come from evil. Evil cannot come from good. If we do not ask God's help against misfortune, instead of accepting it as His Gift, it may overcome us." She did not answer that. Although I did not agree with her it was a very interesting conversation, and certainly this has not been a fortunate trip.' (CC, p.51)

It is because Alice has a positive attitude towards life that she is able to seek pleasure in art and culture, that is, to go beyond Austin's attraction to the physical. In the novel, Guy expresses his interest in his search for Alice's illumination during her trip to Italy:

> I have now come to the entries in Alice's diaries which I discovered on the night when I discussed with Julian the possibilities of this book, when we had examined the portraits of Alice and Austin in the lobby. They are the entries which decided me to write it. I had already known about Austin and Hetty, but it had never occurred to me as the subject of a novel. . . . (CC, p.82)

Of course Guy's preoccupation with art and culture and with the way in which these bring people to a higher plane of life is also Boyd's. Like Lucinda Brayford, who is able to find a new life in her response to a deep-rooted tradition at Crittenden, Alice is also awakened intellectually by her experience of Italy. She reconsiders the value of her own self, realizing what is valuable in her life. Like Paul Brayford, who plays a key role in Lucinda's awakening to a new world, Aubrey Tunstall makes Alice's visit to Italy more meaningful. Initially, Alice just intended to take the trip to Italy as "a non-committal excuse for not returning at once to Waterpark" (CC, p.82). However, Aubrey Tunstall, whom Alice happens to meet on her way to Rome, enables her to become a more than dedicated tourist.

Aubrey Tunstall is an Italianate Englishman, obsessed with art and preferring to live in Italy. When Alice shows surprise at meeting with him in Pisa, Aubrey tells her that "it's more natural for [them] to meet [there] than at Dilton" (CC, p.83). He is willing to show Alice around in Italy. When Alice meets and dines with Mrs Dane, Aubrey's sister, she feels that she is entering a world that she has never dreamed of. At luncheon, Mrs Dane's brilliant and intellectual conversation stirs "her heart and mind" (CC, p.87). Stimulated in this way, Alice falls under the spell of Italy. When she communicates these feelings, Aubrey tells her: "You love Italy because Italy is humanity. It provides the pattern of life for the whole Western world" (CC, p.91). However, Alice realizes that she does not belong there. Her realization is articulated when she is invited to have dinner with Aubrey in his apartment:

> At dinner he was very friendly and natural, and yet I felt that this grandeur of Roman life, which at first fascinated me, and still does, was something separating us rather than bringing us together. One could not imagine there the children coming in for dessert. It seemed to me that he made his life a picture rather than a natural growth, or that he had created for himself a setting so perfect that it restricted the fullness of his life. (CC, p.94)

Nevertheless, Rome is her spiritual home and she cannot turn away from it. As time goes by, Alice imagines that she falls in love with Aubrey, yet at the same time she is aroused by her contact with "humanity" in Italy to renewed love for Austin and her children. Her mind is therefore in conflict:

> I have to deny a whole side of my nature and my life, to end some of my closest friendships if I stay in Europe, but I have to deny my life itself if I leave Rome. (CC, p.96)

As Guy sees it, Alice's romantic love for Aubrey Tunstall is highly idealized. Aubrey is only introducing Rome to someone who loves it, while Alice takes his kindness as love.

> It is pathetically clear that his feeling for her was not as great as hers for him. She had identified him with the the splendour of Rome itself. (CC, p.98)

Indeed, Aubrey's true nature remains unclear to Alice. There is a clear difference between Aubrey's appreciation of Italian art and life and Alice's. Aubrey, if he does not live in Rome, belongs nowhere, though he is conscious that he has become addicted to the place. He warns Alice: "Rome, my Rome at any rate, would be a drug to you. You are worthy of more nourishing food. I am immune to the drug, or perhaps it is all I can thrive on. Do not stay in Rome, but come back to it" (CC, p.96). Guy further suggests that Aubrey tends towards the homosexual. In the relationship between Alice and Aubrey, the latter has no sexual desire and is only interested in showing Alice the grandeur of his apartment and his luxurious

way of life. Thus, from the very beginning, there is some implication that their relationship cannot develop. Guy speculates that it might be Aubrey who informs Austin of Alice's whereabouts. For Alice, her love for art increases her love for life. But, because of Aubrey's peculiar temperament, Alice cannot receive the kind of love she needs from him. In fact, she identifies Aubrey with the grandeur of Rome. She does not realize that Aubrey does not have the strong feeling for her that she has for him. In other words, Aubrey is only part of Alice's dream of fulfillment. However, although Guy has some reservations about Aubrey, he does not agree that Aubrey is "a devil incarnate" (CC, p.99). The reason, as Brenda Niall suggests, is that: "Boyd intends the reader to take into account Guy's own personality, his attraction towards Europe and the world of art . . .".[8] Though Alice rightly chooses to leave for Australia with Austin, the author tries to show that her attraction to Rome takes Alice beyond the world of her husband.

It is significant that Austin's adultery with Hetty and Alice's flirtation with Aubrey are placed against the backdrop of the two worlds: Australia and Europe. In this novel, we see that the Langtons divide their time between two hemispheres, frequently travelling from Australia to Europe and back. Through their constant change of place, Boyd is able to elaborate further the opinions about these two worlds already expressed in *The Montforts* and *Lucinda Brayford.* Australia belongs to a world where there is no culture and where the Langtons chiefly enjoy sensual happiness, while Europe, especially Italy, embodies a world where they are able to seek spiritual enrichment through art and culture.

> Although Boyd was interested in the predicament of having one's physical home in one hemisphere and one's cultural traditions in another, by the time he came to write this series he was interested in the philosophical rather than the social implication of his family's attempting to live in two countries. The geographical movement, as the setting of the novels shifts between Europe and Australia, allows the idea of change to be emphasized, thus providing a perfect background for the presentation of characters moving towards that stage where their essential self is able to find expression in spite of all the changing circumstances of their lives.[9]

The two worlds in this novel represent the essential ambivalence of the Langtons.

Westhill is the Langtons' Australian home and, to some extent, it is regarded as an epitome of Australia. Guy feels less happy there and the reason is as follows:

> . . . I felt the countryside to be large and frightening with so much

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[8]Brenda Niall, *Martin Boyd*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1974, p.29.

[9]Pamela Nase, 'Martin Boyd's Langton Novels: praising superior people' in W.S. Ramson (ed.), *The Australian Experience: Critical essays on Australian novels*, A.N.U., Canberra, 1974. p.244.

> dead timber, with snakes and scorpions, with magpies which snapped their beaks like a pistol shot close to one's ear when they were hatching their young. Sometimes in the summer to go out of doors was like entering a vast scorching oven, and I felt my head would burst. (CC, p.43)

However, for Austin and Alice, this is a place where they grew up and enjoyed all the pleasures of sensation. When Austin is told by Sir William to go to Cambridge to receive a gentleman's education, he refuses to go for the simple reason that "he [does] not live in England and he [is] an Australian" (CC, p.25). According to Austin, Australia does not deprive one of anything. On the contrary. he is happy there and his happiness is largely due to his response to the environment. Alice also regards the large bright landscape of Australia as "her natural element" (CC, p.52). There is no doubt that Austin and Alice fall in love with each other because they have something in common - their response to the natural Australian landscape. Even Austin's adultery with Hetty is, significantly, associated with this environment. If it had not been for the discovery of her husband's disloyalty to her, Alice might have been satisfied with her life in Australia. However, Boyd hints that this kind of happiness cannot offer lasting pleasure. Significantly, the discovery of Austin's infidelity re-awakens Alice's desire to seek her other self in the other world.

Waterpark is the Langtons' home in England. "The very name of Waterpark is compounded of the two elements most lacking in the Australian scene: the water which is the elixir of life in an arid land and the park that implies the aesthetic value of nature domesticated, as against the untamed bush of Australia."[10] Although Waterpark is not one of the great houses of England, but only a modest manor, Guy thinks that he "was probably happier there than at Westhill" (CC, p.43). To Alice, Waterpark represents a place where she can escape from drought and the hot Australian sun, while for Austin it is a place where he can hide his secret from his wife. Alice does not respond to the antiquity of the family and Austin twice travels to Southern Europe without her, with the result that she is dissatisfied with her first trip to England:

> . . . she felt defrauded. . . . but the chief cause was that she had endured these two long sea voyages and had seen practically nothing of Europe. She had longed to travel in France and Italy. (CC, p.52)

Obviously, Alice wants to seek a rich life, a life which can offer her not only the warmth of the family, but also contact with art and culture. Though England has a long history of civilization, life there is too formal and lacks humanity. Alice longs to see Italy herself. In a way, this reveals Boyd's own interest in the place.

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[10]Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Martin Boyd*, Lansdowne, Melbourne, 1963, p.22.

The author saw Rome when he was a small boy in a perambulator, and always wanted to return. While writing *The Cardboard Crown*, he went to Italy again and again. Each time he felt the lure of the country because of its "immense culture and distinction" (DD, p.269). Finally, he decided to live there for good. In *The Cardboard Crown*, Italy represents the centre of Western civilization. It is there that Alice experiences her contact with the cultural world:

> I said to Mr Tunstall that I had no conception of what beautiful places there were in the world until I came to Italy. I have read of them and seen pictures but they did not convey the reality. There is very striking scenery in Australia, and the view even from Westhill is magnificent, but it has not the same connexion with humanity. (CC, p.91)

It is in this environment that she and Aubrey develop their relationship. Though Alice chooses reality and returns to her former life, the Roman experience has permanently changed her. Guy gives Arthur's account of this:

> When she went away she was a very pretty young woman, but when she returned she was beautiful, with the air of someone who knows the world. She had a look in her eye which you don't see in provincial people. You don't see it either in the eyes of people who are just worldly. Their eyes are merely shallow and hard. (CC, p.102)

The Roman trip enables Alice to see clearly the difference between her two worlds and assess their rival claims on her. Though Roman life is unattainable, she still believes that happiness is possible. Twenty years later, Alice revists Rome and is again accompanied by Aubrey Tunstall. Despite the lapse of time, she still has the same feelings towards Rome and Aubrey as before:

> 12 Octobre. Jeudi. S. Donatien. The situation is the same as it was twenty years ago. My reason tells me it is impossible, but my heart denies my reason. What can I do? Nothing of course. Imagine what all the families would say, with their strong sense of the ridiculous, if I were to elope again, thirty-three years later. I have no intention of doing so, yet I cannot deny that if A. asked me to, it would not be easy to refuse. I am sure I would refuse. I am not a fool. I am a fool in my mind. And yet how can I say I am a fool when, because of my feelings, every moment of the day brings me intense delight!. . . (CC, p.152)

The implication is that Alice remains fascinated with European culture. This is also evident in her hope to bring her children up in such a way as to narrow the difference between Australia and Europe:

> I think they should be made aware of Europe from the beginning. I do not want them to suffer any disadvantage from being Australians, and to grow up unfit to mix with people like Mr Tunstall or with those whom I met at Mrs Dane's villa. They should be able to enter the best society that is open to them. (CC, pp.89-90)

Although Alice has this design for her children, she cannot fulfil it. She is constantly disappointed that her children cannot understand the values and ideals

that she respects. The first hint of this is found in the diary entry on her return from Rome: "Mildred has developed a dreadful voice, whining and nasal" (CC, p.100). Alice dreams that Diana, who, like Ada in *The Montforts* and Lucinda in *Lucinda Brayford*, was born after Alice was reconciled with Austin, will marry a young man unconnected with Australia. She wants to introduce Diana to Europe and have her marry one of the three Tunstall boys, who are of suitable age and family background. However, to her great disappointment, Diana, her pride and hope, falls in love with a music teacher called Wolfgang Von Flugel. Alice tries to prevent the marriage. But she suddenly withdraws her opposition to the marriage when Wolfie plays a Chopin Prelude, which brings back to her the memory of her romance in Rome with Aubrey Tunstall. Later, when Alice sees the vitality in Diana and Wolfie's life and discovers Wolfie's creative ability, she decides to take them to Europe, hoping that they too will be able to enrich their lives. Thus the effects of Alice's infatuation with Italy flow on to the next generation.

In the later part of the novel, Guy focuses attention on Alice's efforts to do the best for her children. The children do not realize her intentions. So, in a way, Alice's life is not a success. She records her feeling in her diary:

> I sometimes think I see what the pattern of our lives ought to be. I believe I saw it clearly when I was first married. It seems impossible for us to carry out the design. Circumstances outside ourselves or our natures pull it crooked. I can not think of one person to whom this has not happened to some extent. Are we only put into the world to see what the design ought to be? In another life we may realize the possibilities we saw. Yet the design for me was not impossible. It was only prevented by circumstances. (CC, p.163)

Obviously Alice is trying to understand the course of her own life. She married Austin as she thought that Austin could give her happiness. But because of Austin's obsession with physical pleasure, she could not find real happiness with him. The discovery of her husband's infidelity prompted her to seek fulfilment in art and culture. She had several opportunities to choose happiness in life, but she gave these up owing to the number of other lives dependent on her. In Guy's opinion, Alice is not merely his grandmother, but a saint of the family. She is portrayed as the onion woman, who keeps her dependents "on her skirts" (CC, p.10). To a large extent, her sufferings are the consequences of personal choice. Although Alice cannot attain to happiness, her special quality and spirit is passed on to the next generation.

Chapter 4

Outbreak of Love: the Quest for the Dream of Fulfilment

> The right button is more often pressed by some accident than by our own choice, as when a line of poetry or a glimpse through a doorway may show us where we long to go.
>
> Martin Boyd

Outbreak of Love continues the exploration of Guy's search for truth and happiness in his family. In *The Cardboard Crown*, though Alice renounces her dream of fulfilment, her firm belief in European culture has a particular influence on her children, especially on her favourite daughter, Diana. Indeed, Guy finds a special attraction in Diana, who not only inherits Alice's obsession with culture, but undergoes almost the same experience of seeking self-fulfilment as her mother. In some ways, Guy shares his aunt's attraction to Western culture. *Outbreak of Love* begins with the depiction of his youthful "illumination" during a visit to a museum in Rome. Looking at the headless sculpture of a nymph resisting a faun, he feels an urge to marry. The problem is that he has to find a head to fit the beautiful body of the nymph. He discovers that Diana has undergone an experience, not of "pure joy, but almost painful, the searing light along the unused wires" (OL, p.6), an experience which can illustrate his own search for the head - a slightly comical symbol of happiness. Through Guy's detailed account of Diana's search for heaven on earth, Boyd again investigates where happiness might lie. At the same time, Diana's quest is placed in the context of her debate with Russell on the comparative merits of Australia and Europe. In this way, the author further elaborates his idea of the two worlds.

Guy Langton again appears in this novel as both narrator and character. In *The Cardboard Crown*, restricted by the availability of few sources, he resorts to the diaries of his grandmother, his talks with his uncle Arthur Langton and his memories of the family in order to present Alice's life as a meaningful whole. It seems appropriate to say that the voice of Guy is one of Boyd's major achievements in the Langton series. However, in *Outbreak of Love*, the author shows less interest

in Guy's recounting of family history. Consequently problems appear. Guy tells the story without citing his sources, and this neglect creates some difficulty for the reader. More importantly, the author also confuses first and third-person narration. These technical problems in the novel have drawn criticism. Brenda Niall regards the novel as "uneven, at times clumsy and confused".[1] Brian McFarlane also complains that "In *Outbreak of Love*, Guy has a disconcerting way of wandering in and out of the novel. One accepts that there are certain episodes where he cannot reasonably be present, but the transition is sometimes awkwardly managed and Guy's distinctive voice is lost as the first-person narrator gives away to the omniscient author".[2] In spite of these problems, the novel represents a further stage in Boyd's treatment of the search for truth and happiness.

As always, Boyd associates European culture and art with a degree of fulfillment. Is there any possibility of finding this kind of fulfilment in Australia? Russell Lockwood, an Italianate Australian, returns to Melbourne after twenty years' wandering in Europe with the intention of looking for "the quantity of quality obtainable in Melbourne" (OL, p.7). He believes that "wherever one lives outside Rome, one is in a province" (OL, p.66). Nonetheless, he sees the possibility of European civilization in Australia. His conviction is further strengthened when he happens to meet Diana in the street and perceives a special quality in her:

> She did not look rich or smart, but her shoes were good, and she had some fine pearls round her neck, and he thought: "That woman is somebody," by which he did not mean someone who had money and went to the right houses, but someone who from childhood had been accustomed to certain ways of thinking and who knew the different modes of life, and above all, whose awareness was similar to his own. (OL, p.7)

Russell believes that Diana is "exactly what [he] came out to Australia to find" (OL, p.151). Indeed, Diana is different from what she was when she was young. In *The Cardboard Crown*, she appeared as a selfish and simple-minded girl who married a German musician despite Alice's disapproval. When she appears in this novel, she is forty years old and her children have grown up and are no longer a burden to her. On top of that, she reveals her special quality: a passion for European art and culture passed on to her by Alice.

Yet Boyd indicates throughout the novel that Russell's idea that European culture can be introduced into Australia through a French chef in the Fitzroy Gardens is not realistic. The reason is simply that Australia is not Europe, even

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[1]Brenda Niall, *Martin Boyd*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1974, p.34.

[2]Brian McFarlane, *Martin Boyd's Langton novels*, Edward Arnold (Australia) Pty Ltd., Melbourne, 1980, p.40.

though its people try to be European. There is a vivid account of the social situation in Australia which reveals Russell's view of the possibility of combining the two worlds.

Australia differs from England in that it is less formal in social mores and conventions. However, people there disregard this fact and still try to hold high the English banner, that is, to judge things and human behaviour by English standards. To some extent, they do not know where Australian culture might begin. In *The Montforts*, Boyd criticized this notion of second-rateness through Mabel. In this novel, he elaborates the idea, suggesting that those who attempt to imitate European ways of life in Australia are merely followers of fashion who are unaware of the real value of European culture. Baba is one example of this disease. Baba loves to go to all kinds of parties. At the concert to introduce Wolfie's preludes, she has "deliberately chosen to go first to the theatre" (OL, p.56). She gives the appearance of enjoying the music very much, but it turns out that she has no taste for it. As she says to Arthur: "I hope the music's over. I couldn't listen for an hour to Von Flugel playing. I prefer the jam without the pill" (OL, p.56). When we place her eagerness to attend the concert in the context of her vulgarity, we can see that Baba has no regard for culture. Her purpose in attending functions is not to enjoy herself, but to enhance her social position.

Mrs. Montaubyn is another, though very different, example of someone who wants only to go into "society". Initially, she relies on Wolfie , in whom she sees a chance to enhance her social status because the latter is "the only person whom she [has] so far met with the faintest connection with people 'in society'" (OL, p.18). After Wolfie has failed her again and again, she decides to break into "society" herself. A chance comes when she is invited to the Government House ball. It is at this ball that she humiliates Diana. The detailed description of Mrs. Montaubyn's misbehaviour at the ball reveals Boyd's resentment towards those who are without culture. Boyd said that his intention in the book was to "record a section of Melbourne society as [he] saw it on the eve of the 1914 war".[3] We may recall that the book is the result of his homecoming in 1948, when he intended to settle down in Australia. However, owing to the "strong bourgeois ethos of Melbourne",[4] he renounced the dream and went back to Europe after three years in the Australian countryside.

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[3]Martin Boyd, 'Preoccupations and Intentions', *Southerly*, Vol.28, no.2, 1968, p.87.

[4]Martin Boyd, 'Why I am an Expatriate', *Bulletin*, 10 May 1961, p.12.

Besides those who aspire to European gentility, there are in *Outbreak of Love* some characters who think it is not necessary to have European culture at all. Jack, though he has had his university education in England, appears to be more like an Australian farmer. In his view, "it was impossible to reproduce English village life, with its close cottages, its church, its inn and manor house, round a sheep station" (OL, p.62). Enlarging on the reasons for his disagreement with Russell's idea of importing European culture, Jack states: "We haven't the same responsibilities as English landowners. Our social pattern won't produce culture. It has to spring from the soil" (OL, p.63). Not surprisingly, Jack has a low opinion of Russell:

> He [Jack] did not entirely believe all that he said, but he did not like Russell, or did not approve of him, because he spent money made in Australia amusing himself in Europe, and because he assumed that European life was so obviously superior. (OL, p.63)

The conflict between Jack and Russell not only reflects Boyd's ideas concerning the possibility of the transplantation of European culture, but also his view of Australia and its people. Like their barren land, individuals like Jack cannot assimilate Western civilization. This ineluctable fact makes Russell's dream an impossibility in Australia.

There are still other characters in the novel whose origins are European and who try to live a European way of life in Australia, but who do not seek to escape the influence of their actual environment. These have become a mixture of the two worlds. It is in these that Boyd is particularly interested. The twins Cynthia and Anthea Langton are regarded as cultivated Englishwomen by their mother Sophie, who is herself "Englishwoman with a background, by Australian standards, of immense moral, intellectual and social power" (OL, p.34), and who carefully teaches her two daughters an English way of life. However, the author makes it clear that they are more Australian than English in manner, taste and habits:

> After tea I went with Josie and the twins into the garden, which was supposed by the ladies who came to Arthur's parties to be very English, as it had a sundial, a bird's bath, an oak tree with a wooden seat round the trunk, and lavender hedges. But many of its shrubs and flowers, guavas, hibiscus and passion-flowers are not usually seen in English gardens, while even those which are seemed to be penetrated by the dry brightness of the air, so that the garden had a unique, more aromatic quality, just as the twins themselves, though brought up so carefully to be English gentlewomen, had caught a slight savagery from the hot sun, which combined with their erudition, made them I think a good deal more entertaining than the girls on whom Cousin Sophie had intended to model them. Of the three, Josie had more the air of being used to English lawns. (OL, p.92)

Lady Pringle is another example of the mixture of the two worlds. She came to

Australia as "governess to the children of a former governor" (OL, p.54) and then married a university professor. She boasts of the cultural future of Australia:

> . . . We have the Mediterranean climate . . . and it is that climate which has produced everything of value in Western civilization. Even the culture of the East, in Persiah and Chinah has developed on that latitude. It is certain that Australiah has a great cultural future. (OL, p.75)

Yet Boyd convinces us in the novel that she cannot be one of its pioneers as she simply does not know that Australian culture should not be based on a transplantation of European culture, but rather on its natural elements such as, for example, depicted in a picture of "Winter Sunlight" by Walter Withers. Still, she is sympathetically presented, especially in the episode of the party at which she introduces Wolfie's preludes. Brian MaFarlane has this to say:

> Though Boyd mocks Lady Pringle's ponderous romanticism, it is really her *tone* that has been at fault. That is, the source of Wolfie's inspiration as he lay in the friendly arms of his mistress, Mrs. Montaubyn, was in fact not far from Lady Pringle's notion of rural fruitfulness. For all their libidinous inception, his preludes have been rooted in pastoral images for he has associated Mrs. Montaubyn with "his native hills, the orchards and the vineyards, and he smelled the hedge-roses in her hair"(p.23)."[5]

Boyd's sympathy for this character shows that he himself is greatly attracted to Western culture, and looks at Australia at least partly through European eyes.

It is significant that the argument concerning the possibility of European culture in Australia is advanced in conjunction with the growing relationship between Diana and Russell. Diana and Russell share a common interest in European art and culture, but they nevertheless have different views. Diana does not believe that Russell's idea of a European way of life is possible in Australia. All she wants to do is to go to Europe, whereas Russell, after almost twenty years of absence from Australia, has just returned from Europe imagining that he can find Western culture in Australia. Nevertheless, their shared interests are strong enough to draw them together, even if their differences enable them to debate the subject of the two worlds. The more they argue, the more intimate they become. Diana realizes:

> This European-Australian business seemed to form a sort of pattern to which they were fitting their relationship. (OL, p.81)

Diana believes that Russell has come back "trailing clouds of civilization" (OL, p.8). She used to regard him as her "young brother" (OL, p.11) though both of them were the same age. Now she realizes that "he had not only caught up to her in age, but apparently far surpassed her in knowledge of the world" (OL, p.11). She

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[5]Brian McFarlane, *Martin Boyd's Langton Novels*, Edward Arnold (Australia) Pty. Ltd., Melbourne, 1980. p.32.

therefore imagines that "Russell could provide the exact variety [of life] she [needs]" (OL, p.73). However, Russell also thinks that Melbourne seems "very civilized" (OL, p.8), and is more convinced of this than ever when he meets Diana. For his part, he felt lonely in Europe, even though he was surrounded by culture:

> "I don't suppose you will stay here long, all the same."
>
> "I hope to. It's very lonely in Europe by oneself."
>
> "There are plenty of people there, aren't there?"
>
> "Oh, millions, but I don't know them."
>
> "I believe I heard that you know everybody."
>
> "Yes, but they don't know me. I mean we met and talked and all that, and I even became friendly with one or two, but they still didn't know me, because they had no conception of the way I had grown up, and when they learned I was Australian they always were surprised and said: 'I should never have thought so,' intending a frightful insult to my country as a compliment to me." (OL, pp.8-9)

It is loneliness and a sense of alienation that prompts Russell to come back to Australia. As Diana does not believe that Australia can offer what Russell really needs, she doubts that he will stay very long. But to her surprise, she learns that he intends to live in Australia. Diana demurs:

> "But your mind is in Europe. You like Australia now because you are thinking of all the European things that could be done to it. There will never be a French chef in the Fitzroy Gardens. When you realize that, will you want to stay?'
>
> "I don't see why there shouldn't be. We must put the idea about."
>
> "They wouldn't like it--all those rich Toorak people."
>
> "Then they needn't come."
>
> "They rule the roost, now, and their aim is to be as like correct upper-middle English people as possible. They have no idea of an aristocratic culture--of your ideas and Miss Rockingham's." (OL, pp.78-9)

To further his argument, Russell goes on:

> All civilized Englishmen lived in Italy in their minds. Shakespeare did, but his heart was in England, One's mind may be in Europe but one's heart in Australia. Anyhow, isn't your mind in Europe as much as mine? No one whose mind was fixed in Australia could talk of facades. (OL, p.79)

Russell's idea is to civilize Australia, basing himself on a premise that its climate is similar to that of the Mediterranean. Once, Russell is asked to a picnic supper by

Diana. He is surprised to see an old picture hanging in the room and tries to identify it with a Parmigiano[sic]. In other words, he sees that Diana is like a hidden masterpiece, "full of all kinds of qualities but . . . just put . . . away in a dark corner" (OL, p.96). At table, he praises Diana for her elegant way of arranging elemental things. In his eyes, that is what civilization is all about. In spite of their different views, Diana is drawn towards him not because of physical attraction - Russell appears to be very ordinary in this respect - but because of his knowledge of the world. It is clear that Russell's influence on Diana is quite similar to Aubrey's on Alice. In this novel, Wolfie's flirtation with Mrs. Montaubyn, like that of Austin's adultery with Hetty, provides Diana with a chance to seek her own happiness, which has something to do with European wisdom.

Yet Russell cannot be an adequate lover for Diana, as the author makes quite clear in the novel. Russell cannot compare to Aubrey, who is surrounded by magnificent Italian art and who is able to offer Alice a deeper understanding of the relationship between art and life. Although Russell offers Europe to Diana, he seems uncertain of its meaning. He has to rely on Alice's love of Italy to convince Diana:

> I owe a great deal to her. She was really responsible for my love of Italy. She loved it herself. I remember sitting with her in the garden on an autumn day while she described autumn in the Campagna , and the wonderful golden sense of timeless antiquity one has when looking from the Capitoline hill across the city on a late summer evening. She told me about the stone-pines and the fountains and the colour of the Alban Hills. So as soon as I was free I went there. (OL, p.10)

Although in Diana's eyes Russell seems to be a man with "grand European associations" (OL, p.12), the author shows us that his manners, while perfect, cover a weakness:

> His perfect manners were a gilded cage in which he kept the fluttering bird of his emotions. . . . This feeling of emotion restrained within perfect manners made him attractive to women. The trouble was that when he opened the door of the cage, the bird, confined for so long, was unable to spread its wings. (OL, p.66)

The fact is that Russell is unable to offer Diana real happiness. It appears that he cannot even trust his own judgement. When he first saw Diana, he thought she was what he came to look for in Australia. However, he showed his hesitation about his initial judgement after he heard the gossip of the twins and had to wait until it was reconfirmed by Miss Rockingham's approval of Diana as a lady. At the end of the novel, Russell marries Miss Rockingham and follows her to England, the place Boyd became dissatisfied with in his later life and finally left. In various ways, then, the author shows that Russell is not what Diana really seeks.

Throughout the development of their relationship, one never sees a suggestion of "a mature sexuality at work".[6] However strong, their mutual attraction is something else in disguise; it cannot possibly endure.

Russell represents a world to which Diana longs to go, whereas Wolfie is her down-to-earth husband. In other words, the former stands for her dream or illusion while the latter stands for her reality. Like Alice, Diana has to choose between her dream and reality. No matter how wonderful her dream, it cannot offer her peace of mind or a steady life, something she always tries to find. Ultimately, she does what Alice did before her. She accepts her own limitations and remains in Australia with Wolfie. To some degree, the author implies that Diana has made the right choice, not least by his emphasis on Russell's inadequacy.

Diana's choice shows that she has become mature in spirit. When young she was a capricious and spoilt girl, for Alice "had brought her up to believe that she was something special, that she was destined for a more brilliant life than her sisters" (OL, p.250). Marriage to Wolfie makes her dream of such a life impossible, yet she still holds on to the illusion. The meeting with Russell and the discovery of Wolfie's infidelity provide her with the chance to follow her inclination. In abandoning the dream, she achieves not only her own happiness, but the happiness of her family. Initially, she wanted to elope with Russell, which would have provoked a scandal and brought embarrassment to the marriage of her daughter Josie and John Wyckham. To avoid this, she delays her elopement for three months, a period long enough to heal the rift between her and her husband. She is constantly aware that the barrier between her and her husband is beginning to disappear:

> When he came home he looked so innocent that Diana had the feeling that the barrier she was trying to maintain had dissolved, not through any deliberate action by either of them, but of its own accord. She had to continue for these three months a life of which the habits were not in accord with her intentions. There were moments like this when Wolfie, by some unconscious expression of his personality, so much more effective than his deliberate oglings, made the impulse of her habits irresistible. She had to stop herself laughing and ruffling his mousey hair. He did not notice how near she was to a reconciliation . . . (OL, p.210)

Although Wolfie is disloyal to her, she realizes that she cannot use this excuse, or her anger resulting from his disloyalty as a reason, to divorce him. On the one hand, she longs for the life which Russell has described to her. On the other, she cannot break the tie with her husband and her family. This inner conflict indicates that Diana is no longer a simple-minded girl. She begins to brood over the

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[6]Ibid., p.37.

inevitable consequences of rash action. Mrs Montaubyn's public revenge on Wolfie contributes to Diana's awakening to reality:

> . . . she did not know whether Wolfie was different, or whether she was seeing him in a different light, seeing him as he was instead of through the film of a hallucination in which she had been living for the past six months. That loud slap, as Mrs Montaubyn struck his face, had awakened her to reality. (OL, p.249)

What reality has Diana seen? Mrs Montaubyn's misbehavior may be a warning to her not to elope with Russell. When she saw the possibility of climbing up the social ladder through Wolfie, Mrs Montaubyn was more than willing to flirt with him. Once her dream could not come true, she treated him as her enemy. Diana sees clearly that she cannot follow Mrs Montaubyn's example. No matter how wrong Wolfie is, he is the man she deeply loves. Until now she has lived in illusion. She wanted to live a fuller and more stable life, imagining that Russell could provide her with both:

> Then Russell had suddenly appeared on the scene, just at the time when the children needed little from her but money. He had revived the dissatisfactions of her earlier years. Then she had learnt, in such a brutal fashion, of Wolfie's infidelity, and it seemed to her part of a design; and she told herself that it released her from the condition of her life, and had believed that the fantasies of her youth had only delayed their fulfillment. With Russell she had been building up pictures of life in Italy, the sort of life which probably even Cynthia and Anthea would regard as an adolescent dream. Russell could live that rootless life of pleasure. He had been doing so for twenty years. But how could she begin now? She might perhaps adapt herself to it, but all the time she would be longing for stability, for the familiar things she had always known, and most of all for Wolfie. (OL, pp.250-1)

By renouncing her dream and returning to reality, Diana finally demonstrates her coming of age. At the end of the novel, through her commitment to her marriage to Wolfie, she seems to have recognised her spiritual home in Australia, a home which is compatible with her sensibility. In her letter to Russell, she has this to say about it:

> It is something like the farmhouse in the picture "Winter Sunlight", which you said one day might be my spiritual home. I think you were right. I suppose one is always most at home in the places one has lived in as a child. I used to ride over here when I was ten, as Mrs Schmidt, who lived here then, used to give us a special sort of apple tart she made. (OL, p.254)

Like her mother, Diana has to admit her own limitations and realize that her home is in her own country. Comparing *The Cardboard Crown* with *Outbreak of Love*, we can conclude that Boyd is less directly concerned with Europe in the latter. The fact is that the whole book is set in Australia with the European tradition merely touching the life of the characters. Unlike Alice, Diana really cannot afford

to go to Italy. At most, she can only rely on Russell to satisfy her desire for culture. The implication is that Diana's search for happiness is hampered by the passage of time and changing circumstances. In any case Russell shows himself to be inadequate, as his return to Melbourne itself illustrates. Needless to say, he cannot give what Diana really wants. It seems that it is Diana's imagination which has taken him as lover. However, Boyd makes it clear that Diana is no longer the simple-minded girl she used to be. She sees that there is a choice between imagination and reality and ultimately chooses reality. Throughout the book, the emphasis is on the fragility of happiness. At the end, the outbreak of war throws a shadow over the happiness of Diana and her family and of all the other characters. This alerts us to the author's increasing awareness of obstructions to happiness on earth. And this is more thoroughly depicted in the final two Langton novels.

Chapter 5

A Difficult Young Man: the Quest for the Beautiful Portrait of the Human Face

> That is what I am really seeking for throughout this book, the Memlinc in the cellar, the beautiful portrait of the human face, lost in the dissolution of our family and religion.
>
> Martin Boyd

In *A Difficult Young Man* and *When Blackbirds Sing*, the remaining two books of the Langton tetralogy, Martin Boyd moves from the quest for the possibility of happiness on earth in *The Cardboard Crown* and *Outbreak of Love* to the exploration of the values of the Langton family as they are reflected in the third generation.

In his earlier novels *The Montforts* and *Lucinda Brayford*, Boyd traces the younger generation's exploration of personal identity. In the former, we end with Roaul's search for his values in his return to Australia, and the belief that Australia, as a new young nation, might blossom with European art and culture. In the latter, through the depiction of the destiny of Stephen Brayford, the author shows us that the individual's real value does not lie in geographical location, but in belief in God. In this sense, *Lucinda Brayford* is a religious book. Further, the story of Stephen is important mainly because it contributes to the awakening of the soul of his mother, and the questions it raises remain undeveloped.

Basing himself on the theme of childhood and young adulthood experiences, Boyd further explores Langton values in *A Difficult Young Man* and *When Blackbirds Sing* through his more detailed account of the destiny of Dominic. Unlike Stephen, Dominic is not a religious character, though he has what Guy regards as religious perceptions, and so these books are less religious in tone than *Lucinda Brayford.* More important, all the arguments in the earlier novels are now most clearly summarized. Here we get a restatement of the cultural argument concerning Europe and Australia and a restatement of the question of identity through Dominic, in a way that takes the matter beyond the cultural to a spiritual

or metaphysical plane. The question being asked is not 'which culture is better?' but rather 'where do I belong?' or 'who am I?'. Dominic's search for truth can be divided into two phases. In *A Difficult Young Man*, Boyd focuses his attention on Dominic's emotional development from childhood to early manhood through the complex influences of his family members and the society in which he lives. From childhood, Dominic is isolated from the world. Through Guy's comments on a series of incidents, Boyd suggests some of the reasons for Dominic's isolation and through these reasons we are able to see where Dominic belongs and who he is. Meanwhile, his isolation from society and even his family leads him to seek a personal, inner truth. This is the second phase of his search, a search which is depicted more thoroughly in *When Blackbirds Sing*. In this work Dominic is depicted as an enlisted man during the First World War. He faces a spiritual crisis after he is forced to kill a young German soldier and becomes alienated from society and even from his wife. The novel ends with Dominic's throwing his war medal into a pond - a symbol of his disillusionment. At this point, we are able to see that Boyd doubts that there is any place a man can feel at home. If it is anywhere, his spiritual home is in himself. The second phase of Dominic's search for a spiritual home will be dealt with in the last chapter of this thesis.

Guy Langton continues his role as narrator-persona in *A Difficult Young Man*. In the opening chapter of the novel, he writes about his intention in his new book:

> When I told Julian that I would write this book, the first intention was that it should be about my grandparents, but we agreed that it should also be an exploration of Dominic's immediate forbears to discover what influences had made him what he was, and above all to discover what in fact he was. (DYM, p.9)

Throughout the novel, Guy establishes himself not only as an interpreter, but also as a character. He explores the similarities and differences between himself and Dominic. With respect to similarities, both of them have a strong sense of honour. In the novel, two parallel episodes illustrate this. Dominic is expelled from school because of his defence for his brother, Brian, who has been humiliated by his headmaster because his uniform is a size too large. Likewise Guy runs away from school when his headmaster does not apologize for his injustice, but to Guy's surprise, attempts to bribe him by giving him "a supper of school boy luxury, lobsters, iced cakes, peaches and jellies" (DYM, p.99). However, Guy stresses that he and Dominic have their differences. He is "rational and easy going" (DYM, p.30) while Dominic is emotional, violent and, above all, has "the appearance, the physique and the self-possession" (DYM, p.30) of the duque de Teba. These similarities and differences enable Guy to offer a picture of Dominic which is both

sympathetic and detached. Obviously, Guy is in a perfect position to analyse and judge his brother's behaviour. Indeed, through his presentation of a series of incidents in which Dominic is involved, the reader is able to see more clearly what lies behind Dominic's purposes and emotions as a result of Guy's interpretation of and speculation on these incidents. This indirect method has led to criticism such as that by Brian McFarlane, who in his article entitled 'Martin Boyd's Langton Sequence' says:

> Boyd's narrative methods are often fascinating to watch, but they cannot take us far inside so allegedly strange a figure as Dominic. Once he becomes the centre of the novel's interest as he does in *A Difficult Young Man*, Boyd's imaginative energies falter in dramatizing the kinds of strangeness he keeps claiming for Dominic.[1]

But McFarlane ignores the significance of the role of Guy Langton. As Dominic is inarticulate, he needs someone to state what he thinks. Because Guy is one of the Langtons and is so close to Dominic in outlook he is an appropriate mediator. At the same time, Boyd has a great deal in common with his narrator. In this way, the reader is able to see that Boyd's indirect narrative method reflects the seriousness of his concern about human life and society. Through his reactions to various social situations and Guy's occasional interpretations, Dominic's special quality gradually emerges before the reader. As Leonie Kramer appreciatively puts it:

> One of the most interesting clues to Boyd's serious concerns in *A Difficult Young Man* is his narrative method. It would have been easy, one feels, for him to tell the story quite straightforwardly as the third-person omniscient author. Instead, he entrusts the story to Dominic's brother Guy who, on the face of it, is hardly a suitable choice for the role. He is not present at all at some of the most important events he records. Others, he has neither the maturity nor experience fully to understand. He is even depicted as the kind of person who lacks the gifts to probe Dominic's character. An unsympathetic critic might argue, as Mr French seems to begin to do, that Boyd is simply confused about the role of his narrator, and uncertain as to how far he himself is represented by him. To do so, I believe, would be to ignore the extent to which Boyd's indirect method of narration is directly related to the meaning of the novel as a whole.[2]

In fact, Guy himself is quite conscious of the difficulty of depicting what his brother is, as Dominic appears to be an inconsistent or contradictory person. So, he turns to the painter Sisley for a model:

> In the meantime I only proceed like the painter Sisley, who, when he wished to convey an effect of green, put a dot of blue on his canvas, and

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[1]Brian McFarlane, 'Martin Boyd's Langton Sequence', *Southerly*, vol.35, no.1, 1975, p.77.

[2]Leonie Kramer, 'The Seriousness of Martin Boyd', *Southerly*, Vol.28, no.2, 1968, pp.92-3.

> then a dot of yellow beside it. From a little way off the green thus appears more lively and luminous. So I must put these dots of contradictory colour next to each other in the hope that Dominic may ultimately appear alive. And this is more or less my method throughout the whole of this book - to give what information I can, and let the reader form his own conception of the character. (DYM, p.20)

This seemingly casual and discursive method of narration helps us to grasp the nature of Dominic more fully, and, through Dominic, the entire family ethos. For Dominic's character is central to that of the whole family, even though on the face of it he is exceptional. It is through him that Boyd explores the larger family issues.

In order to explain why Dominic suffers alienation from the world, the writer, through Guy Langton's observation and interpretation, directs us to the conflicts between Dominic and the Dells, Baba, Mr Porson and to the influence of Cousin Sarah.There is no doubt that Dominic is a victim. The exploration of the nature of these conflicts and this influence enables us to comprehend Dominic's identity and grasp Boyd's idea of the meaning of suffering. Dominic's parents imagine that a change of hemisphere is a solution to their son's problem. However, Boyd rejects this. Dominic's problem is largely social, a matter of Langton values and hence cannot be solved geographically.

It will be recalled that in *The Cardboard Crown*, Guy Langton half-seriously attempts a division of society into Right and Left on the basis of attitudes towards money and land. Unlike the bourgeoisie, the Langton family belong to the Right as their purpose in life is to enjoy themselves, not to make money and enhance their social importance. In *A Difficult Young Man*, Dominic is portrayed as representative of the Langtons; in him more than anyone else in the family are exhibited the values of the Right.

To understand why Dominic has problems coping with the world, Guy turns to Dominic's values, and in particular his sense of honour. An example is his trouble with Owen Dell at his birthday party. At the children's table, Brian highly praises Tamburlaine and other children, aroused by his imagination, become excited. They all raise their glasses and shout: "Tamburlaine! Drink to Tamburlaine, the Great Khan of the Mongols" (DYM, p.23), except for Owen Dell, who mocks the noble creature. This prompts Dominic to fling a glass of lemonade in Owen's face. Afterwards, he refuses to ride a horse in the children's race, the race to which he has looked forward for a long time. At Austin's request, Owen Dell rides the horse and eventually wins the race. When Dominic arrives at the scene at the finishing line, he becomes even more furious. Leaping at Owen, he pulls him from the horse

and punches him hard. When he is asked to apologize for his misbehaviour, he at first refuses to do so. Though he later does apologize, he does it not of his own accord. To explain all this, we need to understand the value he puts on the horse Tamburlaine. Alice gives Dominic the horse as a reward for his spontaneous generosity when he welcomes the family home from a trip on which he himself has been unable to go. From *The Cardboard Crown*, we know of Alice's stature and dignity in the family. Her gift has great significance for Dominic, who longs for human companionship in his feeling of isolation from other members of the family. He is therefore very proud of owning this wonderful horse. Guy, who claims to understand his brother's motives, interprets these events as follows:

> So now I understood the whole process of his thought and feeling, since Owen had been gratuitously offensive at luncheon. We disliked the Dells with their coarse limbs, sluggish minds and dreary expressions of puritanism. I thought it an outrage that Owen had been put on Tamburlaine, which had become the focus of Dominic's diffuse pride, and the symbol of his honour. I could not bear that the Dells should triumph over us, and was prepared to go without any amount of cakes and cream to prevent it. (DYM, p.30)

Guy's interpretation makes immediate sense. Owen Dell exhibits fear when confronted with imagination. Dominic in turn recognizes that Owen Dell does not belong to his kind. Owen Dell's mockery of Tamburlaine adds fuel to flames. In this way we are able to interpret Dominic's outrageous behaviour as a defence of family pride and honour.

As Dominic represents the values of the Right, he is bound to have conflicts with those who belong to the Left. Boyd dramitizes the conflict between the Left and the Right through the issue of puritanism. In *The Montforts*, puritanism is criticized through the example of Jackie. In this novel, the writer again picks up the argument and shows the reader that puritanism is the enemy of the Right through a detailed description of Sarah's influence on Dominic's behaviour. Sarah is a Calvinist who believes that enjoyment is sinful and that the only way to free oneself from sinfulness is prayer. Dominic is at an age when he is susceptible to influence and Sarah continually imposes "incomprehensible religious instruction" (DYM, p.18). At the same time, she reveals to Dominic his resemblance to his ancestor the Duque de Teba, who is a symbol of family sin. So, under her influence, Dominic becomes convinced of his own sinfulness:

> He came out from sessions with her, feeling that the devil possessed a large part of him, and that only unremitting efforts to please God, Who faintly disliked him, could save him from eternal torment, which may have been true. (DYM, p.18)

The following example shows how Sarah's influence works on Dominic. At his

birthday party, Dominic upsets the whole family by throwing the contents of his glass in Owen Dell's face. Sarah first impresses on him the sorrow he has caused the family, especially Alice, by his behaviour at luncheon and convinces him of his guilt. Further, she dissuades him from taking part in the race as to do so would be to offend God. According to Guy, Dominic's actions are governed by "dark waves of feeling" (DYM, p.25) and he is "full of Lawrence's dark god" (DYM, p.25). On the one hand, he is eager to join in his family's pleasures, but on the other, his conscience prevents him, as he half believes that those pleasures are either cruel or hedonistic. As a consequence, he leaves the race and goes up into the turret and learns the Collect. This leaves him isolated from other members of the family. In Guy's portrayal, Cousin Sarah always remains "a universal grey blight" (DYM, p.19) on the Langtons. As he recalls things, Sarah has done great damage to him and his brothers as well:

> One of the injuries which Sarah inflicted on us was to give us a lifelong distaste for the beautiful collects for the day which she understood little better than ourselves, by forcing us to learn them while they were still meaningless to us. (DYM, p.25)

It should be remembered that Guy has inherited the pleasure-loving ethos of his elders. In his opinion, pleasure is necessary for life. Of course this reflects Boyd's own ideas. It is obvious that Dominic's alienation from the world owes much to Sarah.

To further indicate that Dominic is a victim of the Left, Boyd explores his conflict with his headmaster Mr Porson. In order to focus clearly on the nature of the conflict, Guy shows us the different views of the Langtons and Mr Porson on eduction. As the Langtons belong to the aristocracy, they have never been interested in school education:

> To them a school was simply something you made use of, like a shop, and the idea that grew up with the nineteenth-century middle class, that one derived social standing from a school, had not reached them. They would have thought it as absurd to expect to derive social importance from their dentist. (DYM, pp.46-7)

Mr Porson belongs to the middle class. Though he talks a lot about gentlemen, he is "apparently not quite in the category" (DYM, p.35), as the following example illustrates. He once asks Dominic to kiss his mother's hand. Dominic is shocked that anyone should intrude into family intimacy and subtly snubs the headmaster. Obviously the latter believes that the value of school lies in establishing social status. In his own words, what he does is "to turn young Australians into English gentlemen" (DYM, p.35).

Since Dominic is imbued with his family's view on education, he is sure to be

indifferent to Mr Porson's goal. At first, Mr Porson is quite pleased to have Dominic and Brian, who have the background of an English country family, as his pupils and expects that they will "set an example and strengthen the good tone of the school" (DYM, p.35). But when he finds out that they are not what he expected, he loses his interest in them and treats them sarcastically. Thus he attacks Brian for wearing a uniform a size too large for him. Dominic cannot bear the humiliation of his brother and tells the headmaster to shut up. This results in his expulsion from the school - an event which may be viewed as symbolic of his victimization at the hands of the Left. Indeed, Dominic sees Mr Porson's humiliation of his brother as an insult to the family:

> Dominic did not like Brian, and they were always having rows, but one of his strongest characteristics was loyalty to his own kind. (DYM, p.47)

The description of the conflict between Dominic and his headmaster illustrates that "Boyd regards the public school as a product of the nineteenth-century rise of the commercial classes designed to inculcate boys with values which will help them to succeed in the commercial world."[3] Clearly the school is no place for Dominic.

The conflict between Right and Left becomes more obvious and more intense in the depiction of Dominic's difficulties with Baba. Baba is obsessed with enhancing her social position. She marries George Langton not for love, but for convenience. Guy has this comment to make when she first comes to meet the Langton family:

> From the obscurities of Moonee Ponds the Langtons must have appeared dazzling, and Baba imagined that she was seizing the opportunity to marry into one of the grandest and richest families within her horizons. (DYM, p.12)

Later in the novel, when George asks her to divorce him, believing that they have no common interests, Baba refuses for the simple reason that her social position would be lowered even if her husband were willing to offer her half of his income. Guy again comments on her stupidity:

> She was so convinced that happy human relationships, and peace of heart and mind were nothing compared with social importance . . . . (DYM, p.166)

Baba's obsession with her social position can also be seen as the purpose of her trip to England. For her, the significance of the trip does not lie in enjoyment but in enhancing her status. Guy's comment hammers home the point:

> It would be wrong to say pleasure, as the scene of Baba's pleasure was

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[3]Susan McKernan, 'Much Else In Boyd: the Relationship between Martin Boyd's Non-fiction Work and his Later Novels', *Southerly*, 1978, p.321.

> in Melbourne, and her activities in London were not themselves for pleasure, but to give herself the pleasure of mentioning them when she was home again. (DYM, p.154)

Indeed, Baba can never understand the pleasure-loving ethic of the Langtons. When she first visited the Langtons, she expected that "correct social usages would be followed as a religious duty" (DYM, p.12). To her surprise, there was lack of solemnity as the place is swarming with children and their elders paid no attention to decorum.

As Baba is a social climber, she inevitably reveals her competitive nature because "good society [is] an association of people to give each other pleasure, while second-rate society [is] competitive" (DYM, p.63). Guy's vivid depiction of Baba's behaviour on Alice's death establishes this:

> . . . Baba showed her claws. She treated Diana and Mildy as if they were dismissed servants and had no right to anything. When she tricked them out of the writing table which, although a fine piece of furniture, they valued for its associations, she justified herself by saying it would be unsuitable in their humble homes. . . . However, Baba thought a doubled income gave her perfect authority to be rude. (DYM, pp.62-3)

It is obvious that Baba belongs to Guy's Left as her interests represent those of the bourgeoisie. When her interests are threatened, she is bound to defend them. Guy sees that Baba's increasing hatred for Dominic is due to the fact that he he poses a great threat to her:

> Baba had always hated Dominic, more for his good qualities than for his bad. She hated his liability to throw away an advantage because of some principle of religion or obligation of nobility, as it was an implied criticism of her sordid *arrivisme*. She hated the gentleness and warmth of feeling of which he was capable, and above all she hated the embarrassment he could cause her, as he had done at their very first meeting, when he had given her those satirical, as she imagined, white flowers. (DYM, p.151)

This incident is one of many illustrating the conflict between the two. According to Guy, Dominic has "compassionate feelings for anyone who [is] outside the herd" (DYM,p.12). Because of this quality, he always gets himself into trouble without understanding why. When Baba first comes to luncheon with the Langtons, Dominic is very angry at the way his relatives speak about her before her arrival as he regards her as "an object of such delicate reverence as a bride-to-be" (DYM, p.12). Before her departure, he perceives that she will be subjected to the criticisms of her future in-laws and imagines that she will have the feelings of "the insulted and injured, rejected by a flippant and heartless world" (DYM, p.14) - as he would in the same situation. He thinks that he should do something to show the kindness of the family when others fail to do so. To his surprise, Baba becomes furious when he presents her some lilies as a token of his affection. Dominic's problem

largely arises from his failure to recognize that in this complex society there are people like Baba whose values are different from his own.

After his expulsion from school, Dominic is sent to work on George and Baba's farm. The loneliness on the farm leads him to walk around the country naked. This behaviour alarms Baba, who concludes that Dominic must be mad and might even murder her some day. Her fears are compounded when she sees Dominic in her maids' room and concludes that he has seduced them there. In Dominic's naked walk and relationship with Baba's maids, Guy sees an impulse towards sexual pleasure in keeping with a desire for harmony with nature. He explains:

> It is possible that strong religious feeling is often accompanied by strong sexual feeling, both the soul and the body trying to escape their loneliness, and by the tension between these two things the soul is either uplifted or damned. (DYM, p.56)

Guy's explanation of Dominic's behaviour can be traced to Boyd's account of St Francis of Assisi in *Much Else In Italy.* St Francis enjoyed life, including its pleasures: "He seemed to be fond of stripping himself naked, which was perhaps part of his impulse to recover the innocence of nature" (MEI, P.147). Francis saw God in the natural world, believing that only those who love the whole order of the natural world can have a love for God. As McKernan puts it: "Boyd has cited St Francis as the closest manifestation of the Perfect Drawing, and creates Dominic Langton in his own image of St Francis."[4] Clearly this perspective would never occur to Baba.

The confrontation between Baba and Dominic culminates in the incident at the bull-ring. Like a mediaeval knight proving his worth to his lady, Dominic jumps into the bull-ring to obtain the rosette for Helena. This gesture of spontaneous heroism arouses Baba's anger and hatred. As he clambers to safety, Baba pushes his hand away. There is an interpretation as to what is behind Baba's action. As Guy sees it:

> Aunt Baba tried to murder Dominic. At least that was how it appeared to me. He scrambled up and grabbed the top of the wall. As his hand appeared, with an unsteady grip, opposite where she was seated between Uncle George and myself, she stood up and pushed it away, so that he would fall back into the path of the bull. (DYM, pp.150-1)

despite Baba's earlier fears, it is not in Dominic's nature to murder anyone. Even when he rides Tamburlaine to death, it is hinted that the person responsible for the horse's death is not Dominic but Baba. After all, when Baba learns that Dominic

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[4]Ibid., p.320.

spends every day riding round the countryside alone with Daisy, it is she who rings Diana and tells her to keep her daughter at home if she does not want Daisy to have the same experience as Baba's maids. Of course, the "danger" exists only in Baba's imagination. When Dominic is rebuked by Wolfie for his supposed evil intentions, he loses his temper and eventually rides his beloved horse Tamburlaine to death. Hearing the news, Baba spreads it further "in an orgy of moral indignation" (DYM, p.76). But it is the morality of the middle class which is responsible for the loss of an innocent animal, though it is only after Dominic kills an innocent German soldier in *When Blackbirds Sing* that he realizes the truth.

All in all, through Guy's narration and analysis of incidents such as these, Dominic's true identity emerges. He is a representative of the Right. The issue of Dominic and Baba is one involving the whole of society. In Boyd's view, society is in a state of deterioration because of the encroachment of the Left, of people like Baba. In order to restore the former order, we need to return to the past, where we will rediscover the things that are of real value. As Guy puts it:

> . . . a collector will value more a stained and mildewed Memlinc found in the cellar, than a two-acre canvas by a Victorian Royal Academician. That is really what I am seeking throughout this book, the Memlinc in the cellar, the beautiful portrait of the human face, lost in the dissolution of our family and our religion. (DYM, p.161)

But one thing we should remember is that it is Baba's values, rather than Baba herself, that fall constantly under the writer's relentless lash. For person herself, Boyd sometimes shows sympathy. For example, he hints that George should also be held responsible for their unsuccessful marriage as he did not love her from the very beginning. After all, she too is another victim of society.

But Dominic's suffering is not entirely caused by Baba and the society she represents. Like Lucinda and Stephen Brayford, Dominic is not a fully developed individual and has to learn to advance through his mistakes. Through the description of his relationship with Sylvia, Boyd explores this aspect of his character.

In *A Difficult Young Man*, the implication that Dominic's suffering derives partly from his lack of experience is mainly conveyed through Guy's observation and judgement. Dominic himself is unaware of his limitations, so that he is still apt to make the same mistakes in *When Blackbirds Sing*. Guy, on the other hand, is very sensitive to the inadequacies of others. As soon as Sylvia falls in love with his brother, he predicts "painful complications ahead for Dominic, and consequently for all of [them]" (DYM, p.130). To see why his prediction is justified, we have to consider the kind of person Sylvia is and what she values in her relationship with Dominic.

As Boyd explained in *The Cardboard Crown*, whether one belongs to the Right or not is not a matter of birth but of what one believes in. This is why Alice belongs to the Right and Sylvia like Baba to the Left despite the fact that she comes from an aristocratic family. The following conversation between Guy and his father illustrates the point:

> I had heard Sylvia say of one of the neighbouring families: 'They're quite poor. I shouldn't think they have a penny over $4,000 a year.' When I told Steven this he said: 'There's no greater vulgarity than to call that kind of income poverty, when half the people haven't enough to eat. If ever there's a revolution in this country it will be fools like Sylvia who'll bring it.' (DYM, p,123)

As far as financial circumstances are concerned, Dominic cannot match Sylvia; he is poor in Sylvia's eyes. Consequently, Guy first thinks "it impossible that she would look at him" (DYM, p.123). However, to his surprise, Sylvia nonetheless falls in love with Dominic, and he explains this as follows:

> Sylvia, like many of the landed gentry was, as Matthew Arnold has observed, a barbarian, but she was a cold northern barbarian, with her savage tastes strictly canalized, and released in certain directions, in field sports and in safe insolence. Dominic was the genuine article, the full-blooded barbarian resplendent from the south and she could not let him go. (DYM, p.164)

It is obvious that Sylvia sees Dominic as something to be possessed. How does Dominic see Sylvia? Guy offers us a picture of his brother's state of mind:

> As soon as Dominic was attracted by anything, it immediately became larger or more beautiful than life. Colonel Rodgers described a bull-fight and his eyes glowed with visions of pageantry and scarlet death. He saw Sylvia in the great white plaster drawing-room at Dilton, her frizzy hair making a halo against the high windows, beyond which rose the stately trees of the park, and at once she became a princess from fairyland. (DYM, p.143)

Through Guy's analysis, we see that both of the young lovers are attracted to appearance rather than reality. However, unlike earlier characters, Dominic does not regard physical love as a key to happiness. Moreover, according to Guy, "when his sense of honour was upon him, he was apt to lose his sense of humour" (DYM, P.146). When he witnesses Sylvia insulting a young man of lesser social standing at a ball, he is awakened from his dream. Gradually, he becomes detached from Sylvia. As for Sylvia, when she realizes that she is going to marry someone beneath her, she decides to break the engagement. By now it is evident that the young lovers have nothing in common. Sylvia has a possessive nature which Dominic instinctively opposes. Although Dominic is a victim as a result of his inexperience, Guy shows us that his brother does not fully understand the implications of his difficulties. On the contrary, he almost forgets his suffering:

> The next day he was very cheerful. He went down and slashed at Colonel Rodgers, not with anger but with joy. (DYM, p.171)

That lack of self-knowledge explains why in *When Blackbirds Sing*, Dominic is able to resume his relationship with Sylvia.

Dominic's suffering from isolation is set against the backdrop of both Australia and England. In his exploration of the meaning of suffering, Boyd again returns to his views on the two worlds. In this novel, through the eye of the narrator, Australia is depicted as a place of natural beauty "where the air had a limpid clearness and the landscape a soft brilliance of colour, such as . . . could only exist in some heavenly region of the imagination" (DYM, p.16). As Dominic grows up in this environment, Guy notes its influence on him:

> As Dominic imagined that he was the heir to all this [Westhill], the partly imitation but partly genuine dynastic atmosphere of the house may have affected his character. (DYM, p.10)

Helena stands as a symbol of the beauty which Australia can produce, and, as Guy sees it, Helena has both intrinsic and extrinsic attractions:

> . . . Helena, who was loved and admired by us all, not merely because she was very pretty, which most likely we did not notice, having apparently equally beautiful complexions ourselves, but because she was lively, full of schemes for fun, afraid of nothing, and kind. (DYM, p.39)

Dominic's worship of Helena and spirit of sacrifice on her behalf illustrates Boyd's own love for the natural beauty of Australia. When Helena falls from a dray, Dominic goes after her and crashes to the ground. Guy gives George and Uncle Bertie's views of Dominic's possible motive:

> George insisted that Dominic had deliberately jumped from the drag [sic], not to lessen his own responsibility but because he believed it was the truth. Uncle Bertie said that was nonsense and that no boy in his senses would do such a thing, which was quite true, but they did not understand that Dominic's spirit frequently leapt ahead of his senses, so that he might be said to be out of them. Bertie said he must have been trying to catch Helena before she fell, and when Dominic recovered he gave him a gold watch with an inscription inside the back cover. (DYM, p.44)

Yet in Boyd's view, Australia no longer remains an innocent place and the reason is that it is in the process of being taken over by the newly-emerging middle class. Baba of course represents the interests of that class. Dominic's problems with her demonstrate that Australia is no longer a paradise.

As Boyd sees it, Dominic's problem is a matter of class and therefore would inevitably occur in any environment. But Laura thinks that "Dominic's more an English type" (DYM, p.86) and suggests to Steven that they should go to England, partly for his sake. Through the description of this return to England, Boyd,

through Guy's eyes, shows the futility of the move. In *The Cardboard Crown* and *Outbreak of Love*, the emphasis was on the significance of Western culture and civilization. But in *A Difficult Young Man*, Boyd shows us that England, though rich in culture, has also been corrupted. When the Langtons arrive, Guy first feels that he has entered the place of his childhood imagination:

> This was my first conscious experience of antiquity, as my grand tour of the Continent had been completed before I was six months old. I arrived at Waterpark at the beginning of my adolescence, and at that impressionable time its dignified but intimate beauty, the deep chestnut lane leading up to the house, the half-concealed gate in the garden wall, the meadows beyond the stream, and the mellow Queen Anne facade of the house itself, hiding from the formal visitor much older quarters at the back, Saxon cellars and low-beamed attics, awakened in me a condition similar to that of being in love. (DYM, p.96)

But Guy's fascination for England does not last long and he feels oppressed there:

> During the next day I began to have some of the feelings which so often possessed Dominic, that the human race was hostile to me. I was also surprised that England, which I had thought the hub of civilization, should reveal itself as less civilized than Australia, and I thought with regret of my school at Kew, where beating was only done by the headmaster, and then with reluctance as a last resort, and never to gratify his own lusts. (DYM, PP.98-9)

Through Guy's experience of several "pickled boys", Boyd indicates that England will not solve Dominic's difficulties. Mr Trend, Guy's schoolmaster, is the first of these:

> He was in early middle age, but had at first glance, like many schoolmasters and dons and also some clergymen, a boyish face. Then one saw that he was like a boy who has been kept in cold storage for about forty years, a kind of pickled boy, and that if he were kissed there would be no tender contact, no delicate bloom against the lips of the person so unfortunate as to make this experiment, but only bristle and scrub. (DYM, p.99)

Colonel Rodgers is another example of the same phenomenon. Mr Woodhall, though a cultivated English gentleman, has "a touch of pickled boy about him, the pleasure in being disagreeable when it is safe" (DYM, p.145). Ian Cowpath, Guy's tutor, is yet another example. Guy feels that the existence of pickled boys in English society prevents him from enjoying the culture that is there. As England is no longer the fairy land Guy had imagined, Dominic is naturally liable to suffer there too. This culminates of course in Sylvia's breaking off the engagement.

In *A Difficult Young Man*, through Guy's experience and through the story of Dominic's suffering, Boyd suggests that neither England nor Australia can supply a suitable environment for the Langtons and for Domninc in particular. Both societies are now corrupted by the presence of the Babas and the Sylvias. What is Dominic's way to freedom and belonging?

As Guy sees it, the solution to Dominic's problem is to challenge the society in which he moves. This is exemplified by the ending of *A Difficult Young Man*, when Guy narrates Dominic's elopement with Helena. Helena is going to marry Wentworth McLeish, "whose sole recommendation seemed to be a coating of both physical and financial fat" (DYM, p.180). According to Guy, when Helena realizes that her marriage with Wentworth has nothing but money to recommend it, she decides to escape with Dominic. It is obvious that at this point Wentworth stands for the Left while Helena stands for the Right. There is no meeting minds between the two, and Helena's elopement with Dominic speaks for itself. Guy interprets Dominic's motive in the elopement:

> There in the garden of the mansion he realized that he was losing forever all that he valued in life, and as he had said to me about Sylvia, 'it was his life,' and he saw no reason to stop him taking the most drastic and immediate steps to secure her. Nothing that happened to either of them could be worse than allowing the wedding to proceed. He combined in this Langton logic and Teba passion. One could not wreck one's life to avoid a social *contretemps*. (DYM, p.190)

It is clear that in terms of the framework of Boyd's values, Dominic is doing the right thing, the one thing that might help him to achieve freedom and fulfillment.

In the image of Dominic's suffering, as portrayed in *A Difficult Young Man*, we are able to judge the values of both the Right and the Left. Dominic, in so far as he represents a class, struggles with problems which are not individual but social. However we should bear in mind that Dominic's awareness of this is not obvious in the novel. According to Guy, all that Dominic does is according to instinct and he himself does not know the significance of his actions. The implication is that Dominic's suffering will continue. In *When Blackbirds Sing*, we see how this social tension also becomes an inner tension, a problem within Dominic himself.

Chapter 6

When Blackbirds Sing: the Quest for a Spiritual Home

> Should he like St Francis have bent and kissed that hideous cheek?
>
> Martin Boyd

When Blackbirds Sing continues Boyd's exploration of Dominic's struggle with a world to which he does not belong. Unlike *A Difficult Young Man*, it concentrates on the hero's conflict within himself, the conflict which is expressed in terms of the image of "a jam in his brain" (WBS, p.125), brought about by his experience of the First World War. In his autobiography *Day of My Delight*, Boyd writes about his intention in the book:

> My aim was to show the awakening of a young man, caught in the 1914 war, to the reality of what he was doing, and to spotlight the essential act of murder; but I wrote to appeal to the minds and not to the glands of the reader, which is expected in war fiction today. As this is the most important negative preoccupation of my life, I wrote with all the cold intensity of which I am capable, suppressing any impulse to be witty or irrelevant. (DD, p.276)

Apparently to demonstrate his seriousness, Boyd has done away with Guy as narrator. In the first three Langton books, Guy appears not only as a historian searching for the truth out of his family relics, but also as an artist, who explores the significance of what he has dug out in his family history. In the previous chapters, I have argued that the creation of the narrator-persona is Boyd's strength in his Langton sequence. So why does the writer give up the use of the first-person narrator in this novel? It seems that in moving from an indirect to a direct method Boyd has not merely something to gain but something to lose as well. *When Blackbirds Sing* does not concern the experiences of the Langton family; instead, it concentrates on Dominic's wartime experience. Guy's role may have seemed to be too limiting in this context. For example, Guy could not uncover for the reader the exact motivation behind Dominic's protest against the war. At best, he could only have suggested possibilities, which would not have suited Boyd's purpose, as the subject matter is now so serious that he cannot afford to leave the reader any doubts. However because of the absence of Guy, the book is less

dramatic and tends to be didactic. In the first three Langton novels, as the author's comments are subsumed in the narrative voice of Guy Langton, they are less obtrusive and hence more acceptable to the reader. But without Guy in this book, the writer has to state his views on Dominic's inner conflict through the third-person narrator, a method which compels Boyd to voice his opinions on war, life and the world directly. As a result of this method, there are fewer dialogues and more extended sections of narration. Hence the book draws criticisms from many critics. Brenda Niall regards it as a problem novel:

> In method it is simpler than the others, in theme more ambitious. There is nothing complex in the point of view; Guy Langton has disappeared and Dominic is shown directly, with his thought, always mysterious to Guy, exposed and analysed by the omniscient narrator. The focus has narrowed; instead of the broad view of family and society, there is intense concentration on Dominic's attempt to come to terms with his own nature.[1]

In defence of the book, Boyd writes:

> Of this book someone said to me: "Are you writing a tract or a work of art?" There is no reason why a tract should not also be a work of art, and vice versa. This book has also been disparaged as lacking in wit and expressing the author's own opinions. It is not possible to write a witty account of Good Friday.[2]

What Boyd has said is quite right. But weighing the gain with the loss in this shift from an indirect to a direct method of narration, it has to be said that *When Blackbirds Sing* weakens the effect of the earlier novels and therefore leaves the reader unsatisfied. In *A Difficult Young Man*, we learn that Dominic is an inarticulate man and his responses to given situations are spontaneous. In this novel, we see that Dominic's crisis results from his instinctive nature. Before he kills the young German soldier, Dominic and the soldier experience a mutual recognition of humanity. This makes it impossible for Dominic to fight. Throughout the book, the writer "insists that though Dominic can reason, his 'heart' has ascendancy over his mind".[3] Since Dominic cannot express himself more fully, there might have been very good reason for Guy to continue his role in this novel.

Although *When Blackbirds Sing* is less successful than the first three Langton novels, it is Boyd's last attempt to transform his own wartime experience into fiction. In *The Montforts*, the writer only briefly touches upon the First World War and hardly has any room to ponder its meaning. Probably he did not feel

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[1]Brenda Niall, *Martin Boyd*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1974, p.36.

[2]Martin Boyd, 'Preoccupations and Intentions', *Southerly*, Vol.28, no.2, 1968, p.86.

[3]Susan McKernan, 'Much Else in Boyd: the relationship between Martin Boyd's Non-fiction Work and his Later Novels', *Southerly*, 1978, p.326.

competent to write in detail about his wartime experience. In *Lucinda Brayford*, Boyd presents his views on war through Stephen's experience during the second World War. The realization that war is a violation of all he values makes it impossible for Stephen to fight. However, the writer only concentrates on Stephen's pacifist ideas. In *When Blackbirds Sing*, Boyd not only recounts his own experience of the First World War, but also draws on his later awareness of the nature of war in his description of Dominic's gradual enlightenment. This is what Patricia Dobrez has said:

> Taking Eliot out of context, we could say that during the war Boyd had the experience but missed the meaning while, in *When Blackbirds Sing*, he discovers the meaning but fails to recapture the experience.[4]

In *When Blackbirds Sing*, Boyd does not focus his attention on actual fierce battles. Rather, he concentrates on the disparity between personal and social morality. This is why we see Dominic suffering not from physical but mental pain. In Boyd's depiction, Dominic's progress towards realization of the nature of war passes through four stages: ignorance; experience; questioning and resolution. Through his description of Dominic's painful search for the ultimate mystery of personal being, Boyd is able to show us how the conflict between personal and social morality leads to inner tension.

As the novel opens, Dominic is travelling to England to join the Army. Unlike Stephen Brayford in *Lucinda Brayford*, Dominic is ready to fight in the war at first. Here Boyd suggests that the hero is in a stage of naive ignorance. Indeed, Dominic never doubts his motivation in respect to the war. When Lady Dilton suggests that he has come over to fight for them, it is something which has never occurred to Dominic, who believed that

> he had come so that he and Helena, or if he did not return, Helena and the baby, could go on living on their farm in New South Wales, and so that it would not be a German colony. (WBS, p.17)

As Boyd sees it, Dominic's ignorance is a product of his past life. In *A Difficult Young Man*, we learn that Dominic is a victim of the bourgeoisie and that he suffers from isolation before he marries Helena. In this novel, we see that his life has completely changed after his marriage. It is Helena who helps him to realize the value of personal existence. Dominic's happy marriage is described in the form of his recollections during his voyage to England:

> He filled his mind with pictures of her, in the dairy skimming the cream, or doing things with plums and apricots and tomatoes, drying them in the

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[4]Patricia Anne Dobrez, *Martin Boyd: the Aesthetic Temperament, a Critical Study*, Ph.D thesis, A.N.U., 1980, p.265.

> sun to use in the winter, or shaking the seeds from the pods of poppies. She was always engaged in country activities of this kind. Sometimes she was waiting for him, leaning over the gate when he came in from riding, or even sitting on the flat top of the gate post, which made him laugh. She also did this for him. He did not laugh easily and she released his laughter. He thought of her after their baby was born. He remembered his emotion, how through this she had brought him into the human fellowship from which he had always felt excluded, and had related him to the natural world which was his home. (WBS, p.8)

Through the description of the couple's harmonious life in Australia, Boyd elaborates one aspect of the hero's personality, that connected with innocence and harmony. It is because of this innocence that Dominic is able to have a simple idea of what the war means to him, at least at first. Indeed, in the beginning, Dominic sees it as a threat to what he has achieved. Both Dominic and Helena have "very simple ideas of honour" (DYM, p.6) and regard the war as a chance to restore their former respectable status, which was ruined by their elopement. In order to maintain his happiness with his wife, Dominic thinks he must go to fight; he also feels that only in this way can he safeguard his personal interests.

Yet, though Dominic is ready to fight and kill, Boyd emphasizes that Dominic is a natural man who loves whatever is beautiful. This emphasis on the hero's aesthetic temperament reveals Dominic as an innocent who is merely temporarily blinded, and who will eventually realize that to fight in the war means to commit murder. The hero's philosophy of life is illustrated by the image of his friendship with Hollis, a young soldier who shares a spontaneous delight in the world. As Boyd sees it, it is because the two live the same spiritual life that their friendship can develop. In a moonlight orchard, Dominic and Hollis strip off their clothes in an attempt to find peace in communion with nature:

> The two young men stood naked, restored to innocence in the stillness of the natural world. There was no sound, and yet it seemed that the stillness was full of sound beyond their perception, the sound of life growing in the trees, and thrusting up the young blades of grass. Hollis was going to say: "We are like the Greeks," but he could not speak. There was something in the night far beyond this allusion, and he felt not only would it be wrong to speak, but that if he did his voice would break beyond his control. "I wish we could stay here for ever," he said at last. (WBS, p.79)

In emphasizing Dominic's friendship with Hollis, Boyd confirms that his hero has a positive attitude towards life. His ignorance is merely due to his innocent simplicity. Once he realizes what he is doing, his willingness to take part in the war will no doubt be turned into revulsion. As Boyd sees it, this change from support to hatred of the war can only come from experience. In this novel, Boyd does not choose to write about Dominic's experience of the hard life of the trenches or of battles between the two sides. Rather, he chooses to concentrate on how the

war brings out the evil within Dominic and forces him to do what he dislikes most. Hence Dominic's experience is portrayed in terms of his conflicting feelings in his relationship with his mistress Sylvia and the reality of the war.

How does Dominic's involvement with his English mistress bring out the evil within him? To answer this question, we need see why Dominic resumes his relationship with her. In Boyd's schema, Dominic has two cultural heritages, which enable him to possess a dual nature. While in Australia, he is revealed as an innocent man, living a peaceful life with his wife and his natural surroundings - and this aspect of his personality is conveyed through his recollection of his life with Helena on their New South Wales farm and the letters from Helena reminding him of their happiness there. On his arrival in England, the other aspect of his personality comes to the surface. Dominic does not feel alienated from this new world. As the author puts it, in a passage which establishes a link with *The Fortunes of Richard Manony*: "For him it was not true that the skies but not the soul had changed" (WBS, pp.21-2). Rather, he feels that he has a responsibility to preserve his European cultural heritage. This takes the form of an intention to remove his family from Australia to England after the war. At the same time, he has an urge to explore this new environment, which he thinks is part of his world. This time, Dominic sees that Sylvia belongs to Europe and at the same time is stimulated in his desire to explore what is largely unknown to him. So he resumes his relationship with her, feeling that he has a sense of possessing his other hemisphere:

> He felt that at last he possessed all that he rightly owned, the other part of his double world, making it complete. (WBS, p.64)

Yet, Boyd argues that in resuming his relationship with Sylvia Dominic is making a mistake. Sylvia will not make him *whole*. Rather, she will simply divide him because she is Dominic's polar opposite:

> When they came into the Ritz restaurant they attracted notice, not only because of their good looks but because of the striking contrast between them: Dominic dark, arrogant and southern, Sylvia a pure gold product of the north. In a way this appearance was misleading, as Dominic's arrogance was intermittent, not like Sylvia's, an unchanging attitude; and her purity of intention was negligible, while his, confused and groping, remained constant. (WBS, p.49)

The implication is that Dominic and Sylvia are different types, attracted to each other only physically. Yet, it is up to Dominic to discover their differences. For the moment, Dominic feels a great relief and satisfaction through his love-making with his mistress:

> He had a sense of freedom in his body that filled him with joy. Nothing

> else mattered. He had won through. All his anxieties, his loneliness and frustrations were wiped away, like dusty webs that had been clouding his sight. He had never known such freedom. Perhaps he had felt a similar joy when he had first been married to Helena, but then it was as if he had entered a haven. He was also taking responsibility. Now he had escaped from enclosing walls and had discarded responsibility. With Helena he was apart from other men. With Sylvia he had broken through into their company. He was the same as other satisfied, normally sensual men, which, he thought, he had always wanted to be. He was full of the delight of his body . . . (WBS, p.88)

Here Boyd indicates that physical love can give legitimate pleasure. However, as suggested in earlier novels, it can only offer limited and momentary pleasure, a truth which Dominic soon discovers. To begin with, Sylvia, whose nature is possessive, is identified with the Left, like Baba. She regards Dominic as something she has lost and wants to regain for a time:

> She knew perfectly well what she wanted. She wanted him physically. She wanted to experience his passionate unrestrained love-making without fear of interruption by her maid. She knew her own mind, and was confident that as the daughter of a rich peer, every idea she held was the right one. She was sure she was entitled to the best, and as Dominic's bodily passion was like a flame consuming her, whereas Maurice's was matter of fact and correct like all his other activities, and as she thought Maurice lucky to have married her and therefore in no position to complain, she really believed that it was right and natural that she should have Dominic if she wanted him. It was her *droit de la grande dame.* But she did not think that her feelings for Dominic or his for her had any point beyond their own physical satisfaction. (WBS, p.94)

Being such a woman, Sylvia cannot and does not intend to make an effort to understand her lover. As for Dominic, what he needs most is not merely physical love but communication of feelings and ideas. He is a lonely man who longs for human companionship. Originally he thought that Sylvia cared about him and would make him *whole.* But when he wants her to share "his feeling about the castle and the sea, to extend his love to include every beautiful thing" (WBS, p.93), she becomes impatient and anxious and shows no interest. Instead of making Dominic complete, she divides him further. A feeling of alienation from his mistress jams Dominic's brain. He tries to distinguish between Sylvia and the Béthune prostitute who gives Hollis his first sexual experience and whom Dominic himself visits once the process of moral disintegration begins to remove his customary inhibitions. But he finds the distinction impossible to draw. Soon this conflict of feelings reaches a climax when Sylvia sarcastically asks a subaltern if he has been "over the top" (WBS, p.104):

> The explosion had been like the bursting of some inner growth, spreading poison through his body. All kinds of black imaginings rose into his mind, affecting his thoughts about Sylvia. . . . Why had she asked the subaltern how much danger he had known? How dared she from her life of safety and pleasure? (WBS, p.106)

Unable to resolve his conflicting feelings, Dominic again feels isolated. This isolation leads him to violence and to recognition of the evil within himself:

> He knew that there was violence in his nature, and that it was said to be inherited from a Spaniard who had strangled altar boys in the crypts of his castle, the ancestor who was a joke to his brothers. To Dominic he was no joke, but a horror latent in his blood. . . . He was saying: "We must have the orgasm, the orgasm of killing. Never mind women. Pierce another man with a sword. Don't release the seed of life, but the blood of death" (WBS, pp.106-7)

Dominic's failure with Sylvia brings out the violence within him, and the implication is that the war operates in the same way, that is, it will also bring out the evil within Dominic. So the novel continues to explore Dominic's involvement in the war and the way in which he is forced to commit murder.

When Dominic goes to the war, he has a sense of honour and a belief in authority. Boyd argues that his inner tension largely comes from his attempt to reconcile the image of authority he sees with what he had imagined. In a conflict with his company commander Harrison, Dominic has a moral crisis. To begin with, Harrison calls Dominic a "bastard" after he returns from his unhappy holiday with Sylvia. This no doubt adds fuel to flames. What Harrison says offends Dominic's sense of honour and propriety:

> He firmly believed that anyone who had been called a bastard could not honourably survive unless he had drawn the other man's blood. He believed that Harrison had stated that his mother, in whom for him were gathered all kindness and human dignity, was no better than the woman he had bought in Paris. (WBS, p.110)

Thus, Dominic decides to fight a duel with his company commander. When he is asked not to engage in a duel but to keep his bullets "for the real enemy", he immediately replies:

> Harrison is my real enemy . . . . The Germans are only my artificial enemy. I know nothing about them except what I read in the papers. When I see them, when the prisoners come in, they are just like the people you see in the street - in London or Melbourne or Paris or anywhere. They are not my real enemies. Harrison is my real enemy. (WBS, p.113)

Yet, this is only a momentary insight into the nature of the war. As the conflict between Dominic and Harrison operates at the personal level, Dominic is not yet ready to see the wider implications of his quarrel with his company commander. At the moment, he is still in a state of confusion, as is indicated by his lecturing his troops on "the pleasure of killing another man" (WBS, p.116). In doing this, Dominic thinks that he has come closer to his fellow-soldiers and that he will soon fulfil his hope to be one of them. Boyd describes his hero's state of mind as follows:

> Dominic alone was calm, enclosed in his dedication to violence. Now at last he was going to fulfil the purpose for which he had left his home, to achieve the greatest orgasm, that of killing his enemy. He now accepted the enemy given him by authority. (WBS, p.118)

Through careful analysis of Dominic's mood, Boyd shows us that the hero is not aware of his motives, despite the fact that he is on the way to commit murder. All he has been trying to do since coming to England is to make up for his isolation. In resuming his relationship with Sylvia he thought that he was beginning to possess the other half of his world; by lecturing on "the pleasure of killing another man" (WBS, p.116) he believed that he had come closer to his fellow-comrades.

Dominic's naive belief in authority is also a product of his isolation. He is not a murderer by nature. Once he realizes his mistake, he is sure to take action. The truth that he has been cheated by authority dawns on him when he is going to open fire on a young German soldier:

> He would kill the enemy who faced him. At last in all the row and confusion, when he hardly knew what was happening, when from his limited view the battle had no order or design, he found himself face to face with a German soldier, and he lifted his revolver to fire.
>
> As he did so he looked in the German's eyes. He was a boy of about the age of Hollis, to whom he had an odd resemblance. In the half second while he lifted his revolver, he gave a faint glance of recognition, to which the boy made an involuntary response. But Dominic did not stay the instinctive movement of the hand, and in that instant of mutual human recognition, with eye open to eye, he shot the boy, who fell dead a yard in front of him, rolling over and over as Hollis had rolled in the dew. (WBS, p.119)

The event illustrates the extremity of Dominic's inner conflict. His killing of the young German soldier is prompted not by his anger but by his longing for human companionship and a false belief in authority. In other words, Dominic is driven to commit murder by a force beyond his control. This action recalls the incident of the killing of Tamburlaine, "the symbol of his honour," in *A Difficult Young Man*. Now by killing the young German soldier Dominic realizes that he has again killed the thing he loves, as in that German soldier he sees the image of his friend Hollis. This incident becomes the turning point in Dominic's awareness of the nature of the war, and it leads him to the further stage of questioning his involvement.

What, after all, is the war about? Dominic's growing awareness is presented through his conversations with Lord Dilton. Although both Lord Dilton and Dominic see the war as destructive to their way of life, they still see it fundamentally differently. This difference in understanding leads Lord Dilton to

diagnose Dominic as shell-shocked and eventually to send him to a mental hospital. Through an analysis of the debate, we are able to grasp Boyd's own view on the nature of the war.

In Lord Dilton's view, the present war is not a national but a class one as it is going to destroy the way of life of the landowners. In this way, the author further elaborates the conflict between the Left and the Right advanced in *The Cardboard Crown*. As Dilton tells Dominic:

> Look at the Wolverhamptons. Old Wolverhampton died. They had to pay death duties. A week later his eldest son, 'the first of the litter', was killed. The second son was killed a month ago - a third lot of death duties. Family exterminated and the estate confiscated, the reward for serving your country. What's left goes to the daughter who has married the son of one of those damned newspaper peers who are hounding us on to ruin. When you pretend you're waging war from high moral principles, you're on the way to hell. You've taken off the brakes. The war is really to make fortunes for the men who are going to buy our confiscated estates. . . . What sort of country will this be when [the] Bowoods are gone, and the Diltons and Waterparks too? I always thought that England was the Bowoods and the Diltons and the Waterparks, with the farms and cottages around them. (WBS, pp.99-100)

Lord Dilton's hostility to the war is based on his view of the interests of his own class. While agreeing with his views, Boyd goes further, however, arguing that this is not only a class war but a war to force innocent people to commit moral suicide. Dominic has undergone such an experience and has done the worst thing in his life - the killing of the young German soldier:

> He believed that then he had violated every good thing he knew, all his passion for the beauty of the created world, which he had felt when he watched the Spanish divers, when he had held the chestnut bud in his hand on the steps of the village church. More, that glance came from the recognition of their deepest selves, a recognition of kind, which wiped out all the material obligation of their opposed circumstances.
>
> In that act he had violated the two things to which his whole being responded in worship; the beauty of a living human body, all the miracle of its movement and thought; and the relation of two souls in brotherhood. He had affronted both nature and God, which cannot be separated. (WBS, p.137)

It is clear that Dominic's awareness has surpassed Lord Dilton's. To begin with, Lord Dilton fears individual moral choice more than the loss of his way of life. When Dominic tells him that he can no longer fight, he feels surprised and tries to reason with him:

> We can't take the law into our own hands. If everyone did what he thought right we'd have anarchy. A government must function, even a bad one, which I admit we have - damned bad one. (WBS, p.136)

As Dominic's revulsion against the war comes from conscious reasoning about a profound experience, he is unlikely to change his opinion. Like Stephen Brayford, he will never give in even if it means suffering from physical torture. But we should note that Dominic and Stephen differ in their principles. The former believes that it is not in the nature of man to kill without need, while the latter sees that it is not in his own nature to kill at all.

Once he is conscious of the significance of the conflict within himself, Dominic must resolve it. Like his friend Hollis, whose face is wounded on one side and healthy on the other, Dominic is also wounded, but in the heart. What should he do in order to regain his own "perfect image" of himself? Boyd alludes to St. Francis when Hollis presents his disfigured face to Dominic:

> Should he like St. Francis have bent and kissed that hideous cheek? Then he thought what a beastly thing that would have been--when the boy offered him his whole face, to kiss only the side that was distorted and horrible, ignoring what he still had of life and healthy, the smooth fresh skin of his youth. And that was what everyone was doing. They would only caress youth when it was wounded. (WBS, pp.169-70)

The implication is that the hero, by caressing the healthy side of Hollis' face, is trying to regain his innocence. Dominic does not simply refuse to fight in the war; he tries to find a place where he will be understood and accepted as an independent and whole human being. Once again, Boyd introduces the theme of the two worlds, which governs the whole structure of the Langton sequence, and makes his final comment regarding it.

In *Lucinda Brayford*, Boyd confirmed: "the continuation of Western civilization in the tradition of King's chapel".[5] But in this novel, he argues that the whole of Western civilization has died and that people can no longer find spiritual fulfillment in Europe. This signifies a major change in Boyd's thinking, a change which can be seen in Dominic's rejection of England. When Dominic first arrived in England during the war, he had a plan to move his family to Waterpark after the war, thinking that he belonged there. But after he has undergone his wartime sufferings, he no longer has this sense of belonging:

> He wanted to escape the past. It seemed to him that all the beauty of the English countryside contained within itself a single evil, the obsession with killing. All the life he had enjoyed, all his amusements were centred on killing. The chapel of the most gracious country house, of Waterpark itself, peaceful and secluded with its lichened stone, its lawns, its stream, its cooing doves, was really the gun-room. (WBS, pp.155-156)

What is Dominic's way out, since England is no longer his home? Boyd's hero

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[5]Ibid., p.271.

decides to return to Australia, the only place where he has come to terms with life. He therefore dreams about his future life with his family on the voyage back:

> He thought of life ahead and Helena waiting for him. They would live at peace together, eating the fruit of their own vine, and no one else would matter. Their children would grow up in the innocence of the natural world. He elaborated his dream during the weeks of the voyage. He re-read Helena's letters, the detailed descriptions of life on the farm, at last visualizing it with the full force of his imagination. (WBS, p.174)

Unfortunately, Dominic cannot regain his lost paradise with Helena in Australia as a gulf has appeared between the two of them. Dominic is no longer the man he was before he went to England. He has no belief in authority after the turmoil he has experienced, whereas Helena retains a simple idea of military honour. The gulf between the two is unlikely to be crossed. When Dominic explains what has happened to him in the war, Helena fails to understand and continues to believe that killing is unavoidable. Her failure to comprehend is further illustrated when she is surprised to learn that Dominic has thrown his military medal into the dam. To Dominic, this medal is a symbol of his evil, while to Helena it represents honour. The story ends with a complete lack of understanding between them: "'You're not serious?' she said" (WBS, p.188). The implication is that Australia is no longer a place where Dominic can be the impulsive self he once was.

Where can Dominic find a spiritual home after he has failed to do so in both England and in Australia? The novel does not give a definite answer. It is quite reasonable to conclude that Boyd planned to deal with it in his next novel in the series. However, the writer did not write another, though he intended to do so. From what Guy says in *The Cardboard Crown*, we gather that Dominic became insane in his last years before his death. It appears that Dominic's alienation from society and his family is complete.

Be that as it may, in *When Blackbirds Sing*, through the depiction of Dominic's inner conflict during the war and his reactions on returning to Australia, Boyd shows us that Dominic ultimately has no confidence either in country or in family. In this way, we are given a final statement of his views on the war, on culture and on the two worlds. To put it simply, there can be no paradise on earth when the whole of civilization is on the way to disintegration. Dominic's only home can be within his own isolated spirit.

Conclusion

The history of Martin Boyd as a novelist is the history of his deepening search for the ultimate mystery of personal being. This search is related to the influence of his family, especially in his early childhood; to his personal experience of the First World War; to his being a witness of the Second World War and, as he saw it, of the collapse of the whole of Western civilization. Boyd has this to comment about his formative experiences:

> From the cradle I had the firm conviction that life was meant to be enjoyed, and my chief preoccupation was how to enjoy it. I also expected it to have the quality of drama and poetry. I was soaked in the Christian religion, which is full of drama and poetry, and seemed to me a clear guide to a life of pleasure. . . .
>
> However, in the trenches of the 1914 war, Good Friday became one of the facts of daily life, and there germinated my deepest preoccupation, too deep to be often in my conscious mind, or I could not have survived. This was with intolerable imbecility of war, but particularly modern war, declared and directed by old men, who made their heroic speeches of defiance, and then scuttled down into their 40 foot deep shelters, while the corpses of the young men, who had had no clue to what it was about, lay in rows along the trenches.[1]

The conflict between good and evil and between authority and justice constantly impinges on Boyd's conscious mind. The present thesis has argued that his Anglo-Australian novels record an ever-deepening exploration of the relationship between the individual and society, morality and tradition, a process which can be traced in the development of themes, particularly in *The Montforts*, *Lucinda Brayford* and the Langton tetralogy. Though these novels have again and again drawn both on his family background and his personal experience, they are not a repetition, but portray Boyd's increasing consciousness of the nature of the conflicts in the world and within himself.

This thesis has argued that *The Montforts* focuses on the history of a family. Through a depiction of the family, Boyd shows us social life in Victoria from the beginning of settlement to the end of the First World War. The theme of "the complex fate", Boyd's bitter hatred of the middle class and the values he espouses

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[1]Martin Boyd, 'Preoccupations and Intentions', *Southerly*, vol.28, 1968, p.83.

have been introduced. Because its emphasis is on family history, the novel does not offer scope to ponder the significance of these themes, however.

Aware of the limitations in *The Montforts*, Boyd shifts his interest from chronicling family history to exploring human nature in *Lucinda Brayford.* Through his account of the destiny of Lucinda, he examines the nature of happiness, showing that complete happiness is beyond human attainment. At the same time, he tries to establish that "only when one's life was linked to the beauties and tragedies of the past . . . did it have any richness of texture, that only when one had accepted a background of pessimism did one's pleasures become civilised" (LB, p.172). *Lucinda Brayford* represents Boyd's search for both a higher appreciation of pleasure and a deeper understanding of pain. Through the resurrection theme at the end of the book, the writer suggests that Western civilization endures, a view which Boyd renounces later in his Langton novels.

The Langton tetralogy is the culmination of Boyd's own life-long search for the "non-existent abiding city" (DD, p.x). Here are combined the merits of both *The Montforts* and *Lucinda Brayford.* Through a portrayal of the values of the Langton family, Boyd analyses the decline of the upper-middle class in Australia. In the first three books of the tetralogy, he uses Guy Langton as narrator-persona so as to convey his own views of life, class and the world. As a result of this new technique, the themes of the two worlds, of the nature of happiness, of the role of culture, and of spiritual growth through suffering and the experience of war become more complex and achieve their fullest expression. The tetralogy starts with a search for the values of the Langton family, but ends with Dominic alienated from his family, his class and his world. At this point we are left with Boyd's loss of confidence in the future.

Through *The Montforts* and *Lucinda Brayford* and then to the Langton novels, Boyd demonstrates his growing maturity as a writer and the development of his original ideas. This maturity owes much to his understanding that "the value of a novel lies in its content of humanity".[2]

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[2]Ibid., p.90.

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